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THE ADVENTUROUS GOD



The Adventurous God

AN EXPLORATION OF SOME OF THE IM-
PLICATIONS OF THE LOGIC OF RELIGION

CHARLES EDWIN SCHOFIELD



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TO
THE FACULTY AND STUDENTS OF
BOSTON UNIVERSITY SCHOOL
OF THEOLOGY

FOREWORD

RELIGION TODAY is too readily content to be merely upon the defensive. We have become so keenly aware of the difficulties which we face in maintaining a vital faith in the face of the contrary currents of thought and life in the modern world that we are likely to exhaust our spiritual energies in apologetics. It is significant that the preaching of the first century was singularly lacking in the apologetic note. Apologetics came later as an afterthought. In saying this we do not mean to use the term "apologetics" in any derogatory sense. We are thinking of the strategy of the Christian propaganda. Jesus sent forth the apostles with the commission, "Ye shall be my witnesses." They were not primarily to argue a case, nor to offer a defense of their position. They were to bear testimony to a great experience and announce that that experience could be shared by all who would. To preach the Gospel means, literally, to "publish good news." That should still be the primary business of the Christian Church. There is a place for argument, certainly. And there is a time when the apologetic needs to be spoken. But, in the main, the Christian preacher, sustained and inspired by an experience that has borne to his own soul the undeniable evidences of a divine disclosure, stands to proclaim

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to men, in the face of all the unresolved riddles that the days can raise, that living is sharing fellowship with God.

When we turn to face frankly the determined unbelief that today is challenging Christian faith and attempt to appraise the grounds upon which that faith is challenged we discover that a suspiciously large share of the burden of that argument rests upon the assumptions with which it is begun. There is surprisingly little in the actual procedure of science, or in the bare facts of experience which science has undertaken to analyze and correlate, that in any way threatens to imperil the essential positions of faith. Further, when we come to examine the source and substance of the message of the Gospels we discover that in our efforts to construct an apologetic that will satisfy the demands of the modern mood we have often betrayed our case by the sort of assumptions with which we have begun our apology. In other words, the most important consideration, when we undertake to appraise the position in which the Christian movement finds itself in the modern world, is the question of the character of assumptions upon which our thinking about experience is based.

We do not need to disparage the record of achievements of science, nor necessarily to invalidate a procedure that limits its attention to the apparently mechanistic and impersonal aspects of experience. We only raise the question whether we may not be shutting out altogether some of the most significant aspects of experience if we confine our investigation to this limited range of phenomena. There cannot be any serious ques-

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tioning of the fact that, if there is nothing more to be said about experience except that which can be included in the picture of an impersonal mechanism, there cannot be found any place in the picture for anything corresponding to religion. But, before we conclude that we must accept the assumption of impersonal mechanism, we had better give careful thought to the claims of religion to reveal tremendously significant and meaningful aspects of experience. Religion has proved to be so marvelously fruitful a way of looking at life that we cannot dismiss its claims too unceremoniously. Moreover, when we find men who have specialized in scientific investigation turning increasingly to the standpoint of religion and declaring that they have found it impossible to arrive at a satisfactory picture of Reality without the corrective of the meaningful interpretation of religion, it becomes all the more essential that we should face fairly the possibility of approaching our study of experience from the viewpoint of religion.

Some years ago Dr. Lynn Harold Hough, in one of his tremendously stimulating monographs, made use of the phrase, "The Adventurous God." He suggested that

"A static immovable God, sitting alone in the solemn splendors of his own perfections, will not move the age in which we live. And it is equally evident that a God suspended at the end of a syllogism, or a remote and bewildering deity found at the end of some intricate and winding path of dialectic will not master the minds, and quicken the hearts, and compel the consciences of the men and women alive today. If we cannot find a God who will meet us at the most intense and real spot in our own experience, if we cannot find a God who can parallel our experiences with experiences of his own

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which, for all their high and commanding quality, make him comprehensible to us, and make us comprehensible to him, we cannot find a God at all. . . . We have a great, masterful, adventurous God. . . . The whole nature of man demands with all the energy of its deepest and most defining qualities that high, adventurous Deity whose experience matches and infinitely transcends the whole range of the experience of man, and yet whose life is in constant touch with every quivering aspect of human need. . . . The experience of contact with this sort of God completely authenticates and validates the claims of religion. It does more. It solves the problem of human life."¹

We might search far before we would find a more vivid and illuminating characterization of the fundamental viewpoint of our Christian Gospel. In the following chapters we have not undertaken to work out a complete philosophy of religion or system of theology. We have undertaken a kind of reconnoitering expedition. We have attempted to discover where it might lead us if we were to set about frankly to construct our picture of experience upon the basis of the assumption that at the center and core of Reality is the Adventurous God. While we do not mean to contend that we may not discover valuable information about life by way of the rigidly objective approach that characterizes the prevailing scientific procedure of our time, we would insist that we can never come to an adequate understanding of the meaning of Reality or the significance of our total experience unless we include an approach to that experience upon the basis of this essentially religious assumption of the Adventurous God. It is our chief

¹ *The Productive Beliefs*, pp. 27, 29, 41, 42.

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mission as believers in the Gospel of Jesus to proclaim to the world our conviction that in all the infinitely varied ranges of our human living we experience in varying degrees the self-disclosure and creative fellowship of the Adventurous God.

Karl Barth has declared that when a preacher stands up to preach to a worshiping congregation there is one question which is always uppermost and cries out imperiously for an answer.

"The impenetrable muteness of the so-called nature that surrounds us, the chance and shadowy existence of every single thing in time, the ill fortune and ill fate of nations and individuals, the basic evil, death—thoughts of these things come to us, disquiet us, and crowd out all that might assure us God is present. The question will no longer down, but breaks out in flame: *Is it true?*"²

This is the irrepressible question of life. The gospel of Jesus voices the only answer that has ever really satisfied the questioning human spirit. We make no apology for this answer. It springs directly out of experience itself. We have known that which has spoken in our hearts as the voice of the Adventurous God. This is the "Good News" that we make bold to publish to all the earth. This is the word that, more than any other word, this generation is most desperately hungering to hear. Whatever other ways there may be of discovering meaning in experience, this is the way that best helps us to establish adequate living relations with our total environment. Whatever else living may mean, living must

² *The Word of God and the Word of Man*, p. 107.

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mean primarily a sharing in a fellowship with the Adventurous God.

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THE LOGIC OF RELIGION

CHAPTER I

SUPPOSE WE BEGIN WITH GOD

WE MUST HAVE RELIGION. Upon that point pretty much everyone seems to be agreed. Time was when those who found the old religious position untenable boldly and jauntily declared for the complete emancipation of human life from all thralldom to religion. That mood still dominates considerable areas of thinking. Rufus Jones declared in an essay prepared for the Jerusalem Conference that the most formidable foe of Christianity today is "Secularism." We might point to the attempt of the Soviet government to eradicate religion from the life of the Russian people as one evidence of this fact. We can point to many indications in the life of the society of which we are a part of a drift away from any reliance upon superhuman, not to say supernatural, forces. To a very large degree men and women today seem to act as though they were persuaded that they must depend upon their own wit and wisdom for whatever they hope to gain or accomplish. And yet, even in the secular life of the modern world, Dr. Jones finds many evidences of qualities that are deeply cherished which must be de-

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scribed as essentially religious. What is actually being attempted in Russia is not the elimination of religion so much as the substitution of the Communist Revolution for the old state religion of Czarist Russia. The Philistine spirit is still powerful in many quarters, but we make bold to aver that it is no longer in the ascendant.

1

MEN are by no means as sure as many seemed to be a generation ago that we can get along without religion. Somehow life has not seemed to fit together very well without some kind of religion. H. G. Wells cried out,¹ nearly twenty years ago, for some kind of "social cement" with which to patch up the fragments of our disintegrating culture and so "salvage civilization." Walter Lippmann becomes the spokesman for those who are "perplexed by the consequences of their own irreligion"² and assumes something of the role of a "voice crying in the wilderness" seeking some new form of "high religion" that will be adequate to give stability and worth to life for the modern man.

There seems to be a growing conviction in liberal circles that something is missing in the picture of life we have been trying to put together. We are still pretty much mixed up as to just what it is that is lacking. But we are coming to something approaching a general agreement that something vital is missing. Upon the theory upon which we set up our demand for spiritual emancipation, as soon as we really succeed in throwing off the

¹ *Salvaging Civilization.*

² *A Preface to Morals*, p. 3.

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bondage of religion, life ought to begin to run full and free. But instead it seems always to be flattening out in unnavigable shallows. Perhaps, after all, it has not been religion as such that has held us in bondage, but rather the particular kind of religion we have inherited from our fathers. Perhaps we have missed the clue by trying to rule out religion altogether. Perhaps we are more desperately in need of religion than ever today. And our problem, then, becomes a problem of discovering the kind of religion that will best serve our human venture.

The major trend of unbelief today seems to be more and more toward the position that we very much need a religion, but it must be a religion without a god. We need not haggle the point here whether or no it is a correct use of the term to characterize as "religion" an attitude toward life that does not focus ultimately upon some superhuman object. Nor, for the present at least, need we raise the question whether it can ever be possible to maintain for any length of time an attitude that may legitimately be called "religious" without some form of theistic foundation. We can let it pass, for the moment, with the observation that thus far in the history of religion and philosophy, men have never yet succeeded in maintaining for very long a completely atheistic religion. It is sufficient, at this point, to observe that the trend of revolt from orthodoxy now seems to be toward this position: that we must have a religion, but it must be a religion without a god.

The old traditional anthropomorphic picture of an Almighty Ruler of the universe, a Divine Judge and Ar-

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biter of Human Destiny, has become untenable to men who think in modern terms. The warmly personal figure of a Heavenly Father which the New Testament offers as a substitute for the Oriental Despot of the Old Testament must also be given up. The psychoanalyst turns in scorn from this as a species of "infantilism" and damns it as a form of "Electra complex." We are told by the Humanists that such a figure simply is not at home in the gigantic cosmic machine of which the natural sciences have given us both blue prints and specifications. The very heart of the new "religion of the spirit" must be the recognition that there is nothing outside of or beyond our human experience upon which human souls can rely. The objective universe as such is totally disinterested in our human aspirations and desires. So far as human values go this is an essentially a-moral universe. The way to peace and self-sufficiency lies through a recognition of this disinterestedness of the cosmic machine, through a patient and persevering search for the impersonal laws that govern its total life, and through a willingness to submit to the discipline of the inexorable necessity that conditions all things and a determination to cherish those values which bring to us the highest subjective satisfaction in a sturdy independence of spirit, as it were, snubbing the universe that is indifferent to us. We must look life in the face, be genuine realists, if you please. Then, when we clearly recognize what our resources are, when we have learned through experiment and repeated testing of our tentative conclusions what habits and attitudes it is most worth while to cultivate,

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steadfastly we can set ourselves to maintain the good life to the ultimate, inevitable, tragic end. That is the new "high religion."

2

FOR the past two generations or more our whole approach to the study of the problems of religion has taken off from the major premise that we must be rigorously objective. We must keep close to concrete objective human experience. We must seek for the explanation of all social phenomena, religious as well as otherwise, in terms of behavior and reaction of the human organism to its environment. This method of approach came as the logical and inevitable reaction from the old traditional authoritarian method. For a thousand years at least practically all human thinking about such ultimate questions as religion raises was based upon the assumption that the final word had already been spoken. There was the authoritative Book and the authoritative Church. In the last analysis all human questions must come to them for answer. And from their answers there could be no appeal. We had worked out by philosophers and theologians a complete picture of the soul of the universe that formed the intellectual foundations of orthodox religion. All the questions of life were answered in terms of the great Drama of Salvation. The primary and determining question was never, "What do we find in concrete experience?" but, "What saith the Word?" or, "What saith the Church?" The deductive method was unquestioned sovereign of human thought.

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Against this old despot the scientific method arose in irrepressible revolt. Generation after generation the war went on until today the scientific method has almost completed the conquest of human thinking. It was, from the first, hopeless to think that religion could escape this imperious conqueror. And, during the past generation, more and more, the whole front of religious thinking has changed to conform to the new alignment. It is not only among outspoken liberals that we find this true. Among the most staunch defenders of moderate orthodoxy we find just as strenuous instance that we must proceed by objective analysis and inductive reasoning as we find anywhere among the humanists or unbelievers. The whole science of Psychology of Religion has developed under the discipline of the norms of objective science. We study objectively the history of ritual and prayer, the history of the prophetic movement, the history of formal religions. We attempt, from the point of view of human aspiration and desire, to account objectively for belief in God and the hope of immortality. We, in effect, assume that religion is a social phenomenon, to be studied as all other social phenomena are studied and to be accounted for upon the same basis as we account for all other forms of human behavior. We have become reluctant in the extreme to make use of such terms as "god" or "soul" or "person." Sometimes consciously and purposefully, more often just by following the general drift of the intellectual mood and habit of our time, we have come to underrate the assumptions of the old orthodoxy. We have come

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to take it for granted that the old formulas of faith have been outgrown. They can no longer be made use of in our religious thinking today.

Perhaps we have not always realized it, but it is none the less true that in all this we have been making a very formidable assumption that has actually prejudiced the outcome of our investigation before we have begun it. We seldom appreciate how completely we are at the mercy of our initial assumptions. We have been so absorbed in the exhilaration of our discovery of odds and ends of objective phenomena that we have not realized that these fragments of observation are meaningless until we see them over against the fundamental assumptions upon which we try to build our picture of life as a whole.

Take the situation in the field of psychology by way of illustration. The most radical cleavage in psychological theory today turns upon the question whether the ultimate basis of our picture of life should be the total experience of selfhood or the particular reactions of the human organism. If you begin collecting psychological data upon the assumption that our human experience has validity as a whole which cannot be left out of reckoning, you will come out with one set of conclusions. If you begin with the assumption that this unitary sense of selfhood is itself a problem to be analyzed into fragmentary and more or less related organic relations, then you will inevitably come out with quite a different set of conclusions. What we do not always recognize is that the character of our conclusions

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depends quite as much upon the character of our basic assumptions as it does upon the data that we gather from our observation or the logic with which we analyze the mutual relations of these phenomena.

It is at least an open question whether the conclusion that any religion that can win the approval of modern scientific thinking must be a religion without a god is due to the imperious demands of the scientific method or whether this conclusion is due to the basic assumptions with which we begin our thinking. If we begin with the assumption that all the reality which we can either know or logically infer must be summed up in terms of the reactions of human organisms to material forces operating in mechanically unvarying forms, there does not seem to be any other conclusion to which we can come but that the universe as a whole can be best pictured as an impersonal mechanism. If, on the other hand, we begin our approach to the study of experience with the assumption that there is something outside of and beyond our human experience that is reacting toward us at the same time that we react toward the objective world, then that at least makes possible quite a different picture of life. Whether or not this dynamic conception of reality proves in the end more satisfactory as a description of experience than the mechanistic conception remains still an open question. All that we would insist upon at this point is that that openness of mind, that willingness to entertain any hypothesis that might prove useful in giving meaning and consistency to experience, which is an indispensable

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characteristic of the scientific attitude cannot arbitrarily rule out the dynamic hypothesis. If we are to be truly scientific in our effort to understand experience, we shall have to attempt the organization of our experience upon the basis of both the mechanistic and the dynamic assumptions. And, in the end, the test which shall determine which of these assumptions we shall retain must be the question which best enables us to construct a harmonious and coherent picture of experience.

We are interested at this point simply in pointing out that practically all the attempts we have made during the past two generations to construct a complete picture of the meaning of experience have gone forward on the assumption that we could not know anything about the inner nature of whatever there might be outside of and beyond our human experience. Toward such questions we must remain completely agnostic. All we can know is the way we react to the stimuli that arouse us and the impulses that arise within us. We have grown increasingly skeptical of the value of any introspective processes. We distrust almost our total inner personal life. We have assumed that the only valid evidence which we can entertain must be derived from our observation of the behavior of other human organisms. When we wish to learn about ourselves we must ask the neighbors how we appear to them to behave and take their word for it as superior to our own inner consciousness.

In all this we have practically assumed that the universe is constructed more on the pattern of a soulless mechanism than of an organism. It is passive, or inert,

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so far as any conscious or purposive attitude that we might conceive it to take toward our human experience. So far as our human desire to understand it, or our human effort to organize experience in forms that yield enduring satisfactions and build up within ourselves a sense of abiding worth is concerned, this is a matter that has no relation to anything that goes on or has its origin in something outside of or beyond our human experience. The great encompassing reality of which we are very unimportant fragments is not only not concerned with our desires or aspirations, it is not even aware of them. In fact, we seriously doubt whether "awareness" is a quality that we can properly ascribe to the universe outside ourselves.

It is true that we have not always been conscious that our thinking about the world was based upon such an assumption as this. But it remains true that practically our whole attention has been absorbed by the problem of looking at life from the angle of our human approach to it. If we have not consciously ruled out the possibility of looking at life from the angle of the attitude whatever there may be outside of and beyond our human experience might be conceived of as taking toward our human venture, we have at least acted as though we did not believe such an approach could be worth the undertaking. We have assumed that we might come to a completely satisfying and thoroughly workable understanding of the universe by confining ourselves to this one avenue of approach.

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3

IN the following pages we undertake to raise the question whether we might not better try to get another point of view before we come to final conclusions about life. We raise the question whether we ought not to explore the possibility of organizing our knowledge upon the assumption that there is something active, dynamic, even purposive in whatever lies outside of and beyond our human experience that makes approaches toward us at the same time that we organize our effort to understand and to make meaningful and worthwhile our experience. We raise the question whether we may not be in danger of missing the whole clue to a genuine understanding of life if we leave out of account this possibility that the universe may be aware and purposive. We would offer the suggestion that it might be possible to organize our experience upon the assumption that back of all the vast complex system of forces or energies or events that impinge upon our human organism and, together with the reactions which are provoked in that organism, produce our human experience there is an active center of life that is reaching out toward us even while we reach out to discover if haply we may find what there may be outside of and beyond our human experience.

We suggest that we might discover a deeper meaning in life if we face it upon the basis of the assumption that in every phase of our experience we have to do with the *Adventurous God*. Suppose that we frankly begin

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with the hypothesis that, in order to understand life, we have to assume God. It is rather suggestive that the great religious literatures begin with that assumption. You will search the Bible, for example, in vain to find any attempt to prove the existence of God. Religion begins by assuming the existence of God and then goes ahead to organize experience upon that basic assumption in order to discover what life may be like when lived upon that basis.

We are not unaware of the dangers that await us when we take this approach toward the problem of understanding experience. The present revolt against the old orthodoxy shows plainly the failure of the old dogmatic method. We do not mean to suggest a return to traditional theology. We simply suggest that, before we come to final conclusions, we had better discover what might be the result if we should begin our study with the assumption of the Adventurous God. When we reckon with the fact that our modern humanistic approach has so far failed to give any sustaining sense of meaning and worth to human experience, when we consider the spiritually and morally paralyzing consequences of concluding that the universe outside of and beyond our human experience is completely indifferent to those desires and aspirations that give to life its supreme values, that upon any non-theistic assumption the whole moral and spiritual venture becomes purely adventitious with no foundation in the structure of reality—then it would behoove us to inquire whether or not we might discover some other assumption upon

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which we might better organize our knowledge of things.

If we are to continue to be truly "scientific," we must be willing to entertain the possibility that the basic assumptions upon which we are at present proceeding are leading us astray. We must be ready to explore the possibilities that another point of approach offers us. In the following pages we shall undertake to outline something of what might be the results if we should begin by assuming that the universe is not basically a mechanism, but an organism. We shall inquire what meaning we might discover in experience if we should begin with the assumption of the Adventurous God.

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"IN THE BEGINNING GOD CREATED." Thus simply the Bible narrative begins the story. Here at the very outset we come upon a great assumption. Let us be candid about it. It is sheer assumption. We do not anywhere, either in Genesis, or in any other of the books of the Bible, find any attempt to prove the existence of God. The Bible begins by assuming God and then proceeds to look at life as it would appear in the light of this assumption. The Bible begins by assuming God. And the assumption goes farther still. The Bible begins by assuming an active, creative, suffering, and redeeming—that is to say, an Adventurous God. That is because the Bible is a book of religion. And it is of the nature of religion that it is through and through, in all its forms, a way of looking at life and a way of going to meet life that assumes that in that which lies outside of and beyond our human experience there is That which comes to meet us. This is the basic assumption of religion: that life can be understood and life can be lived to the full only on the basis of faith in the Adventurous God.

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1

HERE at the outset we had better reckon with the question whether we have any right to define religion thus in terms that postulate God. It has been common among students of religion, both those who approach it from the standpoint of psychology and those whose interest is primarily in religion as a social phenomenon, to look for something simpler than belief in some form of deity as a generic formula of definition. Religion, we are told, is to be understood as referring to typical attitudes and behaviors of men. The idea of gods or beings of personal or semipersonal character is a comparatively late development. It may be seriously questioned whether it is proper to apply the term "god" or the category of being, certainly not that of self-consciousness or personal experience, to the vague, undefined surrounding mystery that is the object of primitive religious attitudes. There is a stage of primitive religion in which it is a question whether we are justified in using even so vague and undifferentiated a term as "mana." And then, besides all this, there are the classic illustrations of such comparatively well-developed religious systems as Buddhism and Confucianism which are either agnostic with reference to the idea of god or even frankly deny the existence of gods of any description. A century ago we had the "positivists" and their proposed "religion of humanity." And now, today, comes the "New Humanism" calling upon us to have done with all childish myths and fables about God, and, with

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mature disillusioned sophistication, set up a religion that knows no gods.

We do not need, at this point, to argue the point whether it is legitimate to define religion in terms that do not include some form of belief in God. We may pass by, for the present, the perplexing problem of personality. We neither insist nor deny that the attribute of personality is necessary to the idea of divinity. We do not press for anything more than an objective study of religions as they have appeared in the experience and behavior of men. We may take religion to mean what it is taken to mean by anthropologists and psychologists generally. And we still affirm that religion, whether we study it in terms of individual or social experience, or in terms of individual or group behavior, always carries with it an assumption of something active or dynamic in whatever there is outside of and beyond our human experience.

Take religion in its most primitive forms. The whole point to that behavior of the naive child-man or the unsophisticated communal group which we distinguish as "religious" is an expectation that out of the all-enveloping mystery some form of cosmic behavior is imminent. The tribe or clan, by its religious act, prepares to meet this mysterious and awesome approach. The queer-shaped stone is a seat of life. The river, the storm cloud, the whispering forest, the wind, the cloud-wrapped mountain, the mysterious dark—the whole complex environment of life is full of awesome possibilities. If it were not for this expectation of something

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approaching with capacity to help or hurt, there would be no occasion for any human behavior of any sort. Religion in its most primitive and elemental forms is an expression of a vague sense of something outside of and beyond human experience that comes forth to meet us. This is what we mean by saying that it is a basic assumption of religion that life must be understood and lived on the basis of faith in the Adventurous God.

When we come to the complex and sophisticated systems of Buddhism and Confucianism we find the same thing true. There is a sense in which Buddha and Confucius were not, strictly speaking, religious leaders. They might better be described as moral philosophers. This is particularly true of the Chinese sage. On the other hand, there were qualities in the attitude which they took toward life, and in the attitudes which they sought to inculcate in their followers, that we have never been satisfied to characterize as anything else than "religious." And, with all their agnosticism relative to the existence of God or gods, both men predicated their whole philosophy upon their notion of the characteristic behavior of the universe. When we turn to Positivism and the nineteenth-century attempt to set up a "Religion of Humanity," we are first of all struck with the fact that this attempt to fabricate a godless religion out of hand resulted signally in dismal failure. It is at least an open question whether the failure to function effectively as an expression of religious experience or form of religious behavior was not due primarily to

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the failure to reckon with this basic assumption of all religion, the assumption of the Adventurous God.

The New Humanism is still in the embryonic stage of prospectus and advance announcement. Its prophets have not yet sufficiently thought through their own vague proposals either to arrive at any considerable consensus of agreement among themselves, or to permit us to come even to tentative conclusions concerning it. It has as yet amounted to little more than the nebulous visions of apocalyptic seers. But, upon the basis of all preceding human experience and behavior, we might be warranted in anticipating that it will succeed or fail in its attempts to function as a religion in proportion as it reckons with this basic assumption of religion, the assumption of the Adventurous God.

2

IN suggesting that we begin our study of religion by taking cognizance of its basic assumption of the Adventurous God, we are not in any wise calling in question the validity of the scientific method of objective study. We are simply pointing out that any objective study of religion as a phenomenon of experience or behavior, if it is truly scientific, must reckon with this assumption. However mistaken we may consider it to be, nevertheless it is there. Perhaps we may have to conclude, as some have already done, that this whole attitude and characteristic form of human behavior that we call "religion" must ultimately pass away. But, as long as we are studying religion we shall have to in-

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clude this, its basic assumption, as part of the phenomena that must be considered. And we shall have to come to some satisfactory way of accounting for its persistence as a characteristic of religion. We have already observed that the drift today seems to be in the direction of a conviction that some form of religion is essential. If therefore we are to continue to have religion, whatever form its future development may take, it will be characterized by an attitude toward life and by habits of behavior that are based upon this assumption of the Adventurous God.

There are unquestioned values in the scientific method of objective study. This applies to the study of religion as well as to any other aspect of human experience. We have learned much and have yet much more to learn from a purely objective study of religion as one of the characteristic forms of human behavior. We need to push forward our study of the development of ritual and ceremonial and similar types of religious behavior. We need to push forward our study of the development and history of priestcraft and the varied forms of religious organization. We need to push forward our study of prayer, both as an individual reaction and as group behavior. We need to push forward our study of the development of the idea of God and of holiness and sin and salvation and immortality, and similar characteristic religious beliefs. We need to push forward our study of religion as a psychological mechanism of defense and adjustment, and as a socializing and integrating discipline. We need to push forward our ex-

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ploration of the relation between religious experience and behavior and the imperious drives of hunger and sex. We need to follow out every clue that we can discover in Freudian, Behavioristic, or Gestalt Psychology. We need to push forward as far as possible our objective study of religion in all its forms.

But if we are to be truly scientific, we shall have to reckon with the possibility that there may be limitations to the usefulness of this method of approach to reality. We are thoroughly justified in learning all that we can about whatever there may be outside of and beyond our human experience by approaching it as though it were passive, inert, a sheer lifeless and inactive object of human investigation. But we must at least reckon with the possibility that whatever there is outside of and beyond our human experience is not passive and inert, but active and dynamic. If we are to be sure that we have learned all that can be learned, we shall have to see what we can learn about reality when we approach its study upon the assumption of the Adventurous God.

Furthermore, the mere fact that religion has proved to be so persistent and powerful a factor in human experience raises the question whether there may not be values which we derive from this dynamic approach to life that we cannot hope to win in any other way. Whatever may be our conclusions as to the relative significance of the myriad forms which religion has taken in human experience, the persistence of religion in the life of the race and the deep hold that it has upon the human heart together with the tremendous role that

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it has played in human affairs compel us to reckon with the possibility not only that the religious approach may be a valid approach to reality, but that it may be a vitally essential approach. There would seem to be a strong presumption that we shall never get at reality in any adequate sense, and we shall never fully succeed in relating our life to the total environment in which we find ourselves, unless we explore the possibilities of an approach that begins with the assumption of the Adventurous God.

3

Now, whatever we may conclude concerning the degree to which this assumption characterizes religion in its primitive forms, there can be no question about the part it plays in the mature and developed religions of culture and civilization. There can be no doubt but that the prophets of Israel were convinced that a Power without themselves had sought them out, laid hold upon them, and sent them forth. We do not need to resolve the question as to the precise manner or degree of inspiration that we meet in the Scriptures. There can be no doubt that the prophets who began their utterances with a "Thus saith the Lord" were convinced that the essential message which they sought to put into words came from some Source outside themselves. They did not seek the truth they uttered so much as the truth sought them and constrained them to its utterance. We may question how fully these men were able to function as the instruments of divine revelation. We may debate

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the question to what extent their statements reflect the limitations of their own knowledge and prejudices. But, we must believe them when they say that they were persuaded that through them the Adventurous God was striving to reveal himself.

Religion would, in fact, be meaningless apart from this assumption. What else do men mean by such terms as "inspiration" and "redemption" and "salvation" and "the witness of the Spirit"? This it is that gives men courage to pray. Men pray because they are convinced that there is That outside of and beyond themselves which will respond to prayer. We do not need here to go into the much-debated question of whether prayer has objective value or whether it is purely subjective in its efficacy. It is sufficient to say that whatever a highly sophisticated skeptic may conclude as to its objective futility and however valiantly he may resolve to substitute for traditional prayer an exercise in conscious autosuggestion, for the average run of men prayer means a reliance upon some sort of Responsive Soul outside themselves. Prayer derives its value precisely from the common conviction that Somewhere there is Someone who comes to meet us as we pray. Nay, the Christian doctrine concerning prayer would have it that it is the coming of that Someone to meet us that first moves us to pray. The very urge to prayer within our hearts is not of our own initiative. It is rather the answer of our spirits to a call from Somewhere Beyond. The Adventurous God has called us and prayer is our response.

This, beyond question, was the point of view of

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Jesus. We may conclude that he was a poor deluded dreamer if we choose. But certainly, as we meet him in the Gospels, he appears as one who was serenely confident of a completely satisfying and soul-invigorating fellowship with the Adventurous God. It was God who had sent him into the world. To do the will of God was his consuming desire. No one can read the prayers of Jesus and not feel that here was one to whom the Adventurous God was very real.

Long years ago Phillips Brooks declared that to him the most convincing reason for believing in God was just the fact that Jesus was so sure of God. Try as we may we cannot escape the conclusion that there must have been some vital relation between this faith of Jesus in the Adventurous God and the quality of life he lived. We do not mean to say that this proves the validity of our faith in God. It may be an open question whether we do not limit unwisely our efforts to understand and to come to terms with life by insisting too rigorously that every proposition which we incorporate in our view of life must be "proved" like a proposition in logic or geometry. And, anyway, we are not concerned in this inquiry upon which we have embarked to prove anything. We are out upon an adventure of exploration. We do not even propose to work out a complete philosophy of religion. We have undertaken to explore some of the implications of this basic assumption of religion that back of all things there is the Adventurous God. At most we would raise the question if, perhaps, our discoveries in this exploration might not be suf-

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ficiently meaningful to warrant our concluding that this assumption offers us the best way of approach to an understanding of life.

For, after all, religion is neither a philosophy, nor a mathematical demonstration. Religion is a glorious faith and a splendid adventure. And when we deal with the issues raised by religion we deal with issues that will not wait for calm dispassionate solution. No matter how much we wish that we might take our position in some aloof objective neutrality and observe the working out of the experiment of living before we ourselves begin to live, we never can hope to maintain this position. Life will not have it so. We must plunge into the very midst of it. We must strike out upon a daring conjecture, knowing that if the event proves our conjecture in error, it will be too late to change the experiment. We shall have to see it through, no matter how tragic the consequences. All that we have as a guide is the fragmentary and often confusing account of what life has done to others who have gone on before us and the growing sense of bewilderment and dismay or of power and assurance that comes to us as we pursue our way.

But here is one thing that gives us courage and hope. Even in the confusion and perplexity of the whirling eddies of life today there seems to be growing upon the hearts of men the conviction that there is something vital and essential to courageous and worthwhile living about this religious approach to the venture. There is something in religion that, no matter how much we

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may think we must change the forms of religion to which we have become accustomed, we can never lose without ourselves becoming irretrievably lost. In the long history of the race we discover that men have persistently sought and consistently found in religion sustaining strength that enabled them to "carry on." Therefore we take courage to believe that in the long last life will mean most and can be most effectively lived if we start out upon the venture believing and trusting in and seeking the comradeship of the Adventurous God.

CHAPTER III

THE IMPLICATION OF SCIENCE

WE HAVE JUST BEEN SAYING that religion, of whatsoever form, is based upon the assumption of the Adventurous God. We would make bold to go one step further and suggest that the whole point of view and method of science carries with it a similar implication. We do not need to haggle the point of terminology and insist that science must immediately subscribe to a confession of God. We need only to bear in mind the analysis which we attempted in the last chapter of primitive religion. All that religion could insist upon is that it may offer an interpretation of some of the implications of science that will make them more meaningful and significant for life as a whole, and perhaps even for science itself, than that impersonalistic interpretation to which we are accustomed. Our contention here may be summed up in this: that that attitude toward experience that leads us on to investigate, to analyze, to evaluate, and to organize; that method by which we proceed in our quest for useful meanings and power to control events; and the character of the form and content of our organized and interpreted experience

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that we lump together roughly under the general term, "science"—all this is built throughout upon an assumption that there is something active and dynamic in the Core of Reality.

1

WHEN we begin to speak about the assumptions of science, we are likely at once to think of the idea of "law." And in this we do not come far from the mark. But we would do well to take time to think through all of the implications of our use of this term, "law." We use the term "law," today, to register our reaction from the naive anthropomorphism of primitive thinking. "Law" is the shibboleth of impersonalism in science. But, for all that, heredity will have its way. Even words can never escape completely their ancestry. Try as we will to rid our minds of all vestiges of personalism in our scientific thinking, our minds still follow the old familiar paths. Before we become too ruthless in our exorcism of traditional habits of thought, we might better stop and ask whether there might not be some reason for the strange persistence of habits of thinking that we struggle vainly to outgrow. It is at least possible that there are aspects of reality that we can never clearly grasp upon any other hypothesis than the assumption that there is something active and dynamic in the very structure of Reality.

Let us examine a little more closely this scientific concept of "law." Whence is it derived? How have we come to make use of such a term? There are two things

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we need to notice. First, the word is a metaphor. We have observed certain characteristics in our environment that we have sought to relate to our past experience so as to make them meaningful for our thinking. We have observed certain uniformities in the sequence of events. We have learned by long observation and by painful experience that these uniformities in the sequence of events are unvaryingly dependable. We can rely upon them. We can use them to forecast the future and to control events. We have asked ourselves how it comes about that these particular series of events always follow in the same order. We have searched for an analogy and have found in our experience of living in a law-governed society the most illuminating parallel. Therefore, we have used the metaphor of "law" to describe the unvarying sequences of events that we have observed.

"The primary meaning of the word 'law' is written enactment or rule of action laid down by authority. Such law, when enforced by authority, secures a certain uniformity of action. The observed uniformity of action of physical objects thus presents a striking resemblance to the conduct of law-controlled human beings. This resemblance was perhaps the ground for the belief, which appeared in the earliest known times, that the course of nature is prescribed by enactment of conscious beings."¹

We do not overlook the fact that

"within quite recent times . . . a less anthropomorphic and more scientific view of the uniformity of natural processes has

¹ Evander Bradley McGilvary, art. "Law," in *New International Encyclopedia*, Second Edition, Vol. 13, p. 645.

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gained wide currency. According to this view, a 'law of nature' is not an enactment expressing the will of some conscious being and obeyed by natural objects, but regularity and uniformity of connection between events; it is thus another way of expressing the fact that all events have causes; and causes of events are not unaccountable entities in some way producing events by some sort of creative magic, but nothing more nor less than the invariable uniform antecedents of those events."²

It is characteristic of the modern mood that we reject the original sense of the use of the term "law." What we do not see is that in doing so we become entangled in an inevitable contradiction. We repudiate the idea of personal agency in the causal nexus of events, and at the same time cling tenaciously to a term to describe the impersonal causal relation that implies personal agency. And it is more than just the tenacity of tradition, the inertia of habit that impels us to cling to familiar terms rather than invent new terms to describe a new idea. There is an implication in the origin of the term "law" from which we cannot escape in any of our efforts to be strictly scientific. We certainly do not need to be bound by the incidental details of the primitive picture. We do not need to carry over all the trappings of oriental monarchy in which the idea of "law" was one time dressed. But we need to keep clear in our minds the main outlines of the picture that gave it meaning as a metaphor to describe our experience. If we are to think scientifically at all, we must have done with the idea of blind chance. To fall back upon any

² *Ibid.*

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irrational contingency in any particular is simply to give up the problem as too much for us. We may not be able to discover all the elements in the causal chain. But we must believe that they exist. Our whole notion of "law" in nature goes upon the assumption that Something at the Core of Reality constrains events in causal relations.

In the second place, we need to remind ourselves of the process by which we build up our formulas of scientific law. As this term is popularly used it carries with it the implication almost of a divine revelation. The modern man stands as much in awe of "natural law" as did his medieval ancestor of "the wrath of God." As we have become accustomed to use the term, it carries with it the flavor of finality and the odor of authority. We need to remind ourselves that the actual objective basis upon which these specific formulations of "law" are founded, is a comparatively limited observation and experience. When we say that so and so is a "law of nature," what we actually mean is that, so far as our experience goes, and so far as we have checked the experience reported to us by others, this sequence of events holds true. It is customary to draw a distinction between "scientific law" and "empirical law." The former is used to describe a formula in support of which the evidence of experience is practically unanimous. The common illustration of this type of law is the law of gravitation. "Empirical law" on the other hand is a formula that we are compelled to recognize as only an approximation of finality. It can be stated in the most

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general terms only. It is admittedly subject to further investigation and probable future modification. Meanwhile it may serve as a rough and ready summary of experience. But when we come to think it through, this distinction between "scientific" and "empirical" law has relatively little value. All laws of science are, in the last analysis, "empirical." All are generalizations of observation and experience. All are open questions, subject to such modification as subsequent experience may require. All rest back upon our basic assumption that there is at the Core of Reality Something that constrains events in causal relations.

2

WE cannot stop, therefore, with the concept of "law" as the basic assumption of science. We must press on to something more fundamental. And here we must reckon with the question whether we should think of the organizing quality of experience as having its basis in something outside our own mental processes, or whether we must reckon that the appearance of an organization of events in causal sequence is a peculiarity of human thinking that has no necessary relation to any objective ground of experience. This latter conclusion is one of the haunting terrors that have brooded perennially over human thinking. There is, of course, no way of demonstrating as by a mathematical equation which of these two alternatives is correct. But no matter how inescapable may seem the logic that drives us toward solipsism, we have never been content to rest

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with this conclusion. To accept this would mean to come to a full stop in all our endeavor to understand or make meaningful our experience.

Here is the fatal fallacy upon which the Humanists are certain to make shipwreck of their Ark. They would have us believe that we must content ourselves with the conclusion that, whatever objective Reality there may be, of which we are a part, it cannot be concerned with or even aware of our human dreams and aspirations. There is, in fact, nothing anywhere outside ourselves for which these dreams exist. The vast impersonal mechanism of things is totally indifferent to human struggle or human aims. This amounts to an utterly groundless discrimination with reference to which operations of our human minds we will recognize as valid representations of objective reality. For there is no escaping the fact that this whole picture of an impersonal mechanism which we are asked to accept as the true representation of objective reality is just as truly and just as completely a creation of our human mental processes as are our ideas of God and immortality. If we are to begin to block off certain elements of human experience from objective reference, it is difficult to see where we can stop short of absolute solipsism and intellectual suicide. If we must conclude that our human idea of "goodness" has no reference to objective reality, it is hard to see what reason we can have for continuing to believe that our human notion of "law" is more than a subjective construct of human intelli-

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gence, necessary, perhaps, to organize its own life, but having no necessary reference to objective reality.

If we are to think at all, we must assume that our thinking processes, the laws of logical reasoning, in some way gear in with the fundamental structure of things. It would be absurd and childish, of course, to assume that our thinking was itself the source of cosmic order. It seems inescapable that we must assume at the Core of Reality Something which constrains events, of which our human thinking process is itself vitally a part, or to which it is organically related, in unvarying causal sequence. That is to say, if we are to have any science at all, we must begin by assuming Something active and dynamic at the Core of Reality.

But our assumption must go farther still. It is clear that if we are to know anything at all we must have confidence in the reliability of our mental processes. And, in so far as we find in these mental processes a means of organizing experience, we must conclude that these processes, in some degree at least, correspond with that organizing quality upon which the whole order of Reality depends. Moreover, we discover in the development of our mental life that we possess more or less limited capacity for constraining events into new causal sequences. As our knowledge and experience grows, we find that we can organize the disparate elements of that experience into a meaningful whole which we are convinced is not merely the creation of our own fancy, but bears some essential relation to the order of Reality. Hence we must assume that whatever it is in Reality that

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produces the appearance of order and seems to constrain events in causal sequence, it must be something that in some sense corresponds to the processes we discover within our own being. Whatever content we may wish to add to or subtract from our idea of God, it is clear that God must be One who possesses at least the highest attributes of human personality. We shall come to this question again, when we face the problem of anthropomorphism in the next chapter. We are concerned here simply in making clear that science and the whole adventure of learning and discovering meanings in and setting up control over experience, is based upon the assumption of an active, dynamic quality at the very Core of Reality. To give this a religious interpretation, we would say that science itself implies the Adventurous God.

3

WE do not make any apology for venturing to offer a religious interpretation of a scientific process. Most of the conflict that has arisen between the advocates of science and the defenders of religion has grown out of a tragic misunderstanding of the particular character and proper mutual relations of these two expressions of the human spirit. Science is characteristically given to exploring processes; religion offers meaningful interpretations. Science is concerned with questions of structure; religion deals with the field of values. Science seeks to discover methods of procedure; religion attempts to find the most worthwhile meanings. It is always

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a legitimate sphere of scientific investigation to apply the technique and method of science to an analysis of the structure and processes of religious experience. The discipline of science is an invaluable asset to religion in its effort to discover richer meanings and conserve traditional values. And it is also true that we can never come at the full significance of any scientific formula of method until we have seen its meaning in the light of those values which religion helps us to discover. Without the illumination of religious interpretation, scientific methods alone are tragically barren and, sooner or later, likely to become dangerously destructive.

Take this whole matter of learning and discovering meanings in experience. We have seen that the only basis upon which we can build an adequate theory of knowledge is the assumption that there is that at the Core of Reality which organizes events in patterns similar to the patterns in which our mental processes organize experience. Now, unless we are to resolve the universe into a pluralistic chaos, we must reckon that these very mental processes by which we organize experience into meaningful patterns are themselves included in some way in the sequences of events that make up the structure of Reality. We do not need to attempt here to untangle all the snarls in the skein that have been spun round the problems of the relation of finite creatures to the Infinite, or the problem of human freedom and Divine Omnipotence. It is sufficient, here, to observe that our human mental processes in their operation represent, in some degree, the activity of

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whatever it is at the Core of Reality that constrains events in causal relations. In other words, the fact that we know at all is itself dependent upon the Adventurous God.

All learning becomes, thus, essentially a process of revelation. Learning is a co-operative enterprise, a form of divine-human adventure. We have long since learned that the most fruitful scheme for education is one in which teacher and pupil enter most intimately into a fellowship of mutual disclosure and discovery. From the religious point of view, the essential elements in the learning process are the Adventurous God seeking to reveal himself in characteristic forms of activity and interpretations of value, and the questing human spirit going out in search of truth and meaning in experience. We do not raise here the question raised by psychology as to the method or process of the functioning of the human mind. We are seeking, not a psychological description, but a valuational emphasis. The details of psychological theory, so long as psychologists stick to their last and do not attempt to camouflage a mechanistic metaphysics in the borrowed clothing of psychological theory, will not materially effect the conclusions to which we have come. However you may explain the processes by which our minds function, if we are to make any use of these processes, whatever they may be, we shall have to proceed upon the basis that they do gear into the cosmic order and yield themselves to the control of its organizing Core. Our thinking is itself

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a form of adventurous fellowship with the Adventurous God.

From this point of view much of the debate about revelation and inspiration loses its point. Science itself becomes a form of revelation. The only significant difference between the subject matter of traditional revelation and the revelation of science concerns the particular character of the discoveries made. The revelation of which the Scriptures preserve for us the substance concerns itself with that interpretation of the values of experience that will make that experience most meaningful and productive for our human venture. It was the supreme discovery of the prophets that life could be most meaningfully interpreted when we see it in terms of an adventurous fellowship with the Adventurous God.

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WE CANNOT GO FAR along the line that we are traveling without coming square up against the challenge that what we are proposing is a reversion to an anthropomorphic view of God. We are, in effect, trying to make God over in the image of man. We are surrendering to the inertia of habits of thinking inherited from primitive racial history. It is taken for granted that there can be no place in a world the canons of whose thought are set by modern science for such an anthropomorphism as the Adventurous God.

1

WHEN we speak of anthropomorphism we think at once of all the myths and fables we have read as children. We think of Zeus and Hermes and Athena and Odin and Thor and Freja and the innumerable deities which fill the mythology of all primitive peoples. We think of the simple, naive story that appears in Genesis of a God who walked in the garden in the cool of the day, and of angels who enjoyed the hospitality of Abraham. And we say that, however useful this way of

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thinking may once have been, it clearly will not do for men today.

It is only a step from this to the point where we begin to question whether any elements of the category of personality are any longer useful for our thought about God. When we think of personality, we think of the obvious limitations of human personality. We think of the instability of personality. We think of how men are dominated by impulse, controlled by heredity, swept off their feet by emotion, carried along by the inertia of tradition, subject to whirlwinds of mob panic or passion, and forever handicapped by limited mental equipment. We think of how many psychologists are insisting that human behavior is not radically different from animal behavior and that all of the functions of personality can be understood and explained in terms of sub-human reactions. And we think, certainly, we cannot conceive of God as one "with like passions" even as we ourselves. Then we turn to the family of Grand Abstractions that we have called to our aid to help us define what we mean by God. We think of such terms as Omniscience, Omnipotence, Omnipresence, and the Infinite and the Absolute and the World Ground. Clearly such terms do not apply to personality as we know it. And equally clearly we cannot think of God, if we are to think of him to any purpose, without including such terms in our definition. Then when we think of personality and intelligence and purpose and consciousness, we are constrained to remember that in our experience these functions are related to a physical

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organism. To think of God in terms of personality seems to threaten to lead us back toward the crudest forms of anthropomorphism. There is, moreover, the whole drift of our modern thinking, under the influence of the mechanistic pattern toward a picture of life drawn in terms of impersonal forces. As we shall see in the next chapter, the "machine myth" has us fast. The most popular form of imagery by which we now strive to organize our fragments of discovery about the world is that which conceives of the total scheme of things as one vast machine. As we shall see, when we deal directly with this "machine myth," we fail to take into considerations the inevitable personalistic elements in the figure of speech that we use. But the total outcome is that we conclude that, however we may think of God, we clearly must rid our thought of the last vestiges of anthropomorphism.

Now, before we too hastily conclude that, in order to rid our thinking of this taint of anthropomorphism, we must eliminate all personalistic elements from our thought of God, if indeed we can continue to use the term "God" at all without dragging into our thinking personalistic implications, we had better examine pretty carefully what we shall have left. If we eliminate personality as a characteristic of God, if we conclude that we must organize our thought about the Totality of Things upon a strictly impersonalistic basis, will we thus succeed in laying this bogy of anthropomorphism? We make bold to suggest that, no matter how we choose to think about the meaning of things, we shall never

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escape from some form of anthropomorphism. And, moreover, when we choose impersonalism rather than personalism, we fall into a much less satisfactory form of anthropomorphism than we must reckon on if we think of God in personal terms.

It does not matter whether we like it, or whether it suits the prevailing fashions in philosophy or not, we cannot construct any picture of experience that is not modeled upon a personal experience. If we make any gods at all, we must make them in our own image. If we make any attempt to get a notion of the Totality of Things we must organize it in patterns, either of personal experience as a whole, or patterns that are fragments of personal experience. As we have already seen, our efforts to know anything about this world of which we are a part begin by assuming that the organizing spirit that holds together the disparate phenomena of which we become aware through our experience must correspond to the organizing process by which we relate our disparate experiences into an intelligible whole. That is to say, we begin our attempt to know by fixing the stamp of our knowing and reasoning process upon Reality as a Whole. This is stark anthropomorphism. It may be true that the Totality of Things will not fit into the scheme which we assume when we undertake to know it. That simply means that it is for us unknowable. There is no point in debating purely speculative theories. As a matter of fact we cannot even debate the possibility of a World Ground that is essentially non-personal, that is, that has no correspondence in any of its

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structure or processes with the structure and process of personal experience. There is no point at which we could possibly take hold of such a notion. It could not have any meaning for us. To assume that Reality must be non-personal is to close the door on the possibility of knowledge and put an end to thinking. This is fundamental unreason.

The only way in which we can know anything is by relating the new to the old in our experience. Anything that impinges upon our human consciousness for which we can find no meaningful parallel in our past experience must remain for us a baffling mystery. This does not mean at all that we are shut up to the past and that experience cannot bring to us new elements. It is one of the universal characteristics of experience that it is always shot through and through with new discovery. But the new is never totally unrelated to the old. In fact, as we relate the new to the old we continually discover new meanings in the old. The only direct experience we can possibly have of organized and related phenomena, the only direct experience of Wholeness or Totality, is our experience of being persons. No person is a complete whole. There are disparate elements in every experience of personality. At times these disparate elements become so significant that personality breaks down into divided personalities or into various forms of insanity or mental aberration. In a sense every human individual represents only fragmentary personality. A completely integrated personality is the supreme achievement of human living. Holiness is

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"whole-ness." Atonement does mean "at-one-ment." Persons as we know them are only approximations of personality. But it is in our experience of limited and to an extent fragmentary or only approximate personality that we come nearest to an experience of Wholeness of Totality of Experience. Hence, when we try to draw into one picture all the disparate elements of Reality, if we are to make that picture meaningful and relate it at all to our experience, we must fashion it, either after the pattern of our experience in its nearest approach to Wholeness or Totality, or else select some fragmentary feature of our total experience and make of that the pattern of our universe. Whether we use the term "God" or not, whatever pattern for Reality we choose, it will inevitably be stamped with our likeness. Some form of anthropomorphism is inescapable.

2

IN the next chapter we shall deal at some length with one particular form that impersonalism popularly takes, that of mechanism. For the present we shall direct our attention to some of the other ways in which we commonly attempt to build a picture of Reality out of one of the fragments of personality. To a very considerable extent the trend toward impersonalism is due to the influence of mathematics and formal logic in our thinking. Men have always been intrigued by the finality and completeness of mathematical equations. We have been tremendously impressed by the degree to which the structure and processes of nature are proving themselves

amenable to mathematical formulas. "God geometrizes" is one aphoristic way of putting it. One might say that the whole universe performs prodigious feats in higher mathematics. In fact there have been not a few philosophers from Pithagoras on down who have attempted to reduce all Reality to numbers and mathematical equations. Philosophers generally have bowed to the sovereignty of formal logic. The syllogism has appealed to us almost as powerfully as the mathematical equation. We are generally accustomed to reckon this sort of reasoning the highest achievement of the human mind. Here we find irrefutable demonstration. Here we find pure reason. Here we find absolute truth. Here we approach most nearly the Core of Reality.

We do not mean to speak disparagingly of mathematical demonstration or of pure logic. We are inclined to believe that the philosophers are led by a valid insight when they conclude that these mathematically or logically expressed relations have cosmic significance. The point that we are concerned with just here is that both logic and mathematical demonstration are functions of human personality. The laws of mathematics and the laws of logic are alike statements of the invariable processes of human intelligence. The process by which we arrive at our mathematical formulas, and the process by which we formulate our logical principles are expressions of the intellectual faculty of human personality. When we say "God geometrizes" we are saying, in effect, that the Core of Reality is a process that corresponds to typical functions of personality. When,

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then, in the name of logic or mathematics we go on to say that the World Ground must be conceived in impersonal terms we are indulging in a contradiction in terms. We are saying that a process which we have made intelligible and meaningful just by virtue of its similarity to familiar personal experience is impersonal. We are refusing to recognize the very characteristic of reality that gives it meaning and makes it possible to organize our experience.

The language of philosophy has often fallen easy victim to the intimidation of abstractions. Following the lure of logical reasoning we have attempted to generalize our experience in order to organize it and make it usable. We have taken any number of disparate concrete ideas of individual men, for example, and by the development of our capacity for inductive reasoning we have eliminated all possible individuating elements and so arrived at a sort of logical lowest common denominator, "Man." By this means we manage to get our unorganized experience organized into general meanings that lead us toward some idea of the meaning of the Wholeness of Things. We pursue this line of development in our search for ultimate meanings and so arrive at last upon the threshold of the temple of the Grand Abstractions—the Infinite, the Eternal, the Omnipotent, the World Ground, the First Cause, the Veiled Being, the Great Unknown, the World-all, Brahma. These are a few of the innumerable aliases by which the Ultimate All-inclusive Reality at times has been known. At times we have gone so far as to refuse to give a name to the Un-

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namable. Even to give a name is to set limits. And the Ultimate must be the Illimitable. We forget that to give up the use of words—for names are after all just words—is to give over any attempt at clear and cogent thinking. For words are the instruments of thought. It is to let one's self slip over into a vague dreamy emotional mysticism that is intellectually stupefying and ethically demoralizing. A part of the consequences of surrender to this form of intellectual opiate is our failure to recognize the essentially anthropomorphic character of the whole process. We forget that the whole process of inductive reasoning is a form of personal experience, a functioning of one of the faculties of personality. When we assume that the Ultimate Reality can be best described by an impersonal abstraction we are again attempting a contradiction in terms. For it is only by the exercise of personality that we create abstractions. To say that an abstraction is an adequate picture of Reality is to put the stamp of a form of personal experience upon Reality. It is essentially a form of anthropomorphism.

3

WE are left no alternative, unless we are to give over thinking altogether, except either to fashion our picture of Reality after a fragment of personal experience, or to use the total experience of personality in its approximate wholeness as our pattern. In view of the fact that Wholeness and Totality are the essential qualities for which we are searching there could not be much question what our choice should be. As long as we limit our-

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selves to fragments of experience we inevitably leave out of account much that must be included if the picture is to be complete. No matter how generally applicable mathematics may appear to be to the structure of experience, there is much that escapes expression in mathematical formulas. No matter how useful logic unquestionably is, there are many elements of experience that cannot be caught in the meshes of logical analysis.

When we suggest that we cannot arrive at an adequate idea of God without thinking of him in terms of that approximate Wholeness or Totality of experience that is personality, we do not mean to say that God is to be completely defined by our human experience of personality. Personality as we know it in direct experience is at best only an approximation of complete wholeness. All that we are insisting on is that, imperfect as it may be, personal experience is the nearest approach to Wholeness or Totality that we know. It would seem clear that when we are looking for clues as to the probable character of Ultimate Reality we ought to follow the clue that offers us the nearest approach to the Wholeness and Totality that we are seeking. Many have attempted to escape from the dilemmas that the evident limitations of human personality present by using such abstractions as "super-personal." This is only another way of saying that God is more than anything we know in our human experience, even taking our experience in its wholeness and totality. In the last analysis, the objection to the use of the term "personal" as applied to God on the grounds that it is "anthro-

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pomorphic" amounts to no more than an objection to making the evident limitations of human personality definitive for God. We do not see how it helps matters to limit still further personal experience and take a mere fragment of personality, like the faculty for abstract reasoning, and make that the pattern of Reality. It makes a difference whether you make the limitations or the possibilities of personal experience the pattern, what force there is to the objection to anthropomorphism. When we say that God is personal we simply mean that, whatever else God is, he cannot be less than that approximate Wholeness and Totality of experience which we know in personality. It is in our experience as persons that we get the best clue as to what God is like.

If we are to be guided by the New Testament in our thought of God, there can be no question but that we must think of him in personal terms. In fact, it is difficult to see how God can be brought into that creative relationship with men that Jesus set before us as the goal of life except as he does possess those personal attributes which Jesus used to describe him. Fellowship is a term of personal relationship. And Jesus clearly exemplified in his whole career one who knew as a present reality of personal experience a fellowship that came to him, not merely through his own search for and struggle to attain living relations with the Total Scheme of Things, but through the active quest for human fellowship of the Adventurous God. This fellowship which he enjoyed he believed should be the normal experience of all men. He encouraged men to hope for a

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realization of that fellowship by his insistence that God was actively seeking to establish fellowship relations with men even more than they were with God. In the Shepherd of Lost Sheep and the Father of the Prodigal, and most clearly of all, as we shall see in Chapter IX, in his acceptance of the cross, Jesus set before men the Heavenly Father whom he knew, with whom he shared creative fellowship as the Adventurous God.

CHAPTER V

THE MYTHOLOGY OF THE MODERN WORLD

BEFORE WE GO MUCH FARTHER we had better attempt a reckoning with one of the dominant motifs of modern thinking. At first thought it will appear absurd to speak of "the Mythology of the Modern World." We are used to associating the idea of "myth" with primitive people and early stages of human culture. We are fond of taking something of a patronizing attitude toward these elder cousins of ours. We congratulate ourselves that we have outgrown their childish habits of thought and exploded most of their childish fancies. We have arrived at an epoch in history when all our thinking is guided by scientific principles of investigation and our thinking is done in terms of observed phenomena, and of generalizations based upon our observations and constructed according to the laws of logic and reason. It seems like a queer quirk of intelligence, a sort of intellectual atavism, a bizarre reversion to primitive types of thinking, or else a strange naive superstitious credulity that could prompt anyone to suggest that there might be any elements of mythology left in the thinking of the modern world.

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1

NOTWITHSTANDING all this, we are still obstinate enough to persist with the idea that the subject of this chapter may not be totally incongruous. "Myth" is a term that is used in a very loose and undefined sense. In a general way it may be used to describe the whole body of primitive traditions that arise in the earliest stages of human society. Some myths are designed to explain the origin of natural phenomena. Some are intended to explain the origin of social customs. A whole group of myths cluster around semi-historical hero characters. It is in such myths that historians are generally inclined to recognize a considerable element of reliable tradition. Some myths seem to be utterly irrational and to defy explanation. Perhaps they were the resultant of misunderstandings of the meanings of words or traditional phrases.

When we speak of "the mythology of the modern world" we are particularly concerned with that type of myth that undertakes to offer an explanation of natural phenomena. Such myths are designed to answer such questions as: How did the world come to be? What causes rain and wind and lightning and similar disturbances? Whence comes the fructifying properties of soil and sun and seed? What is the meaning of the alternation of day and night, of winter and summer, and the movements of the heavenly bodies? The *New Standard Dictionary* defines this type of myth as "the philosophy of creation and of nature expressed in narrative form, in which the activities of the universe are

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pictured as the conduct of personal beings, and the forces and objects of nature are personified."

A few familiar examples will suffice to illustrate. Thunder and lightning to the Greeks were missiles hurled by Zeus; to the Teutons they were the crashing hammer of Thor. Winter was explained by the Teutons as the death of Baldur; by the Greeks as the descent of Persephone for her annual residence with her husband Pluto. The sun was a golden chariot. To the Babylonians the creation of the world was explained by a weird tale of a struggle between monsters in which one, Tiamat, was killed and the body split in half, one portion forming the heavens and the other the earth.

When we attempt to push back of these simple naive narratives and inquire how they came into existence we enter a field of unlimited speculation. Amid all the many theories that have been advanced to explain the origin of myth the one that offers most light is that which suggests that these stories are highly imaginative efforts to describe and explain the phenomena of nature. To the primitive man there came experiences of sight and sound that were strange and mysterious. Following the imperious urge of awakening intellect he was driven to attempt some explanation. Groping around in the maze of half-articulate ideas that made up the furnishing of his mind, he drew word pictures and gradually evolved narratives that helped to make intelligible to him the great mysteries that surrounded him. There is a sense in which it is true to say that all mythology is a purely imaginative product. Certainly the stories as

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they were told by the ancients had no exact parallel in objective experience. On the other hand, it is never altogether fair to stop with this conclusion. We must recognize that there was a real experience which the story was intended to explain. The immature mind of primitive man was grappling with ideas too big for his powers of expression. His queer picture narratives were the result of his attempt to make abstract truths concrete and meaningful. As S. S. Farrar has put it in his *Critical History of Free Thought*:¹ "Myth is the creation of a fact out of an idea."

2

WE are now ready to approach directly the question whether there may be elements of mythology in our modern ways of thinking about the world. Suppose we re-examine the furnishing of our minds and inquire how we are in the habit of trying to picture this universe. We have become so accustomed to our way of picturing in imaginative terms our thought about the Total Scheme of Things that we take it for granted and rarely find occasion to reflect upon it at all. We assume that, since we have built up our picture by obedience to the rigid discipline of the scientific method, since we have strenuously striven to expunge from our thinking every vestige of the old personifications of natural phenomena, as a matter of course our idea of the universe must be a simple transcript of objective fact. There can be nothing mythical about it at all.

¹ P. 233, footnote.

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It is a commonplace in the understanding of any grammar school boy that this earth on which we live is a round, or nearly round, ball whirling round and round, and swinging, as it whirls, in a broad ellipse around a much larger sphere whose surface is a seething mass of super-heated gaseous substance. The earth is only one of a group of similar bodies swinging in regular orbits around this sun, and, like some of the other planets, it in turn has a satellite which revolves about it and travels with it in the annual journey around the sun. Then we push out further our astronomical voyaging and observe that this whole solar system, of which ours is one of the smaller planets, is only one of a vast innumerable system of suns, each with its encircling and accompanying planets. And our minds grow dizzy as we contemplate the infinite immensity of space. The fact that most impresses us, even more than the magnitude of the universe, is the fact of the orderliness and dependability of its operations.

We have followed the lead of this clue of orderliness and regularity of movement into our study of the more minute aspects of experience. Just now we are reading a good many articles concerning the analysis of the atom and are letting our imaginations run with speculations concerning the possible release of power through the disintegration of the atom by electrical or chemical processes. Here, in minutiae, we have cast our thought into essentially the same forms in which we have attempted to make intelligible the phenomena of the vast immensities of space. We speak of an atom as consisting

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of a nucleus around which electrons revolve at distances that compare relatively to the distances between the sun and planets in our solar system. We sometimes speak of an atom as a "microcosmos"—a miniature universe.

It will help us to recognize just what we have been doing in our attempt to find new forms for the organization of our increased knowledge if we take a little time to observe some of the somewhat crude devices that we have sometimes used to make this new mode of picturing our thought about the world concrete and vivid. I remember a piece of machinery which was used in one of the grammar grades in the public school to illustrate an elementary course in astronomy. There was a yellow ball in the center about six or eight inches in diameter that represented the sun. Then there were arms of varying length extending out from the base upon which this sun rested. Upon the ends of these arms were slender axes upon which smaller balls were placed. These represented the planets. From some of these planets smaller arms extended holding still smaller balls, their moons or satellites. The whole apparatus was geared up and operated by a crank. When you turned the crank the sun began to turn upon its axis, the planets to revolve at varying rates of speed about the sun and turn upon their axes, and the moons to revolve about their respective planets turning upon their little axes.

This was a rather crude machine. A Norwegian physicist has constructed, for purposes of experiment, a miniature universe incased in a huge glass ball with a capacity of seventy liters. The sun and planets are rep-

resented by copper spheres and metallic disks. In this little "universe" he has conducted many interesting and illuminating experiments.

These two pieces of machinery illustrate in a concrete and obvious way the process that we have all of us carried out in our minds in formulating our picture of the universe. These pieces of machinery, representing the solar system, are just somewhat crude forms of our modern myth. If we will sit with an analytical psychologist for half an hour, he will take our whole universe to pieces for us and leave us vaguely wondering what has happened to all this fine piece of intricate machinery which we have been contemplating with such comfortable assurance that it is a true photographic reproduction of the actual universe in which we live.

If we really want to hold ourselves down to the simple lines of hard and fast observation, we will quickly discover how large a part myth has played in building for us our modern picture of the universe. We have observed certain phenomena. To begin with, we have observed the regular sequence of day and night, and the alternation of the seasons. We have observed the phases of the moon. We have contemplated the myriad points of twinkling light that look down at us from the midnight sky. Then we have taken our telescopes and peered into them and have seen strange broad disks of light. We have kept careful record of the way in which these twinkling points or broad disks of light have passed before our vision. We have observed their relations with each other. We have interposed bits of glass

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cut to particular shapes, which we call prisms, between our eye and these bright spots in the sky and observed how the white light breaks up into a beautiful array of colors. So we have gone on, collecting odd bits of observation and storing them away in the pigeonholes of our memories.

Then we have set about trying to piece together these bits of observation. We have formulated broad generalizations of experience and called them, first, "hypotheses," and then "theories," and then, as more and more of the phenomena that we observe seem to fit into the form of our theory, we have called them, "laws." Now, our minds are so constituted that pure abstractions are difficult to grasp. We are driven on to try to discover some concrete picture form upon which we can stretch our imagination. So we have gone out, with the ideas grown out of the accumulated observations of our modern scientific study, and sought for some picture form upon which these abstract ideas may be arranged to give them dramatic and imaginative value for our thinking. The two pieces of mechanism to which we have referred help us to see the sort of picture form that we have adopted for our use. We have imagined our universe as a great infinitely complex machine. And then we have gone on to assume, just as did our primitive child-minded forbears before us, that this picture-image, which we have constructed to make concrete and vivid our ideas, has itself objective reality. Just as Farrar observes, we have sought to create a fact out of an idea. So have we made our modern myth.

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When we realize the part that the machine myth has played in the building of our modern picture of the universe, it becomes relatively easy to understand some of the points of stress at which our modern philosophy has come into sharp conflict with older forms of thought, especially those forms of thought in which our religious beliefs have found expression. The primary difficulty that many modern men and women have found with belief in God has arisen out of an assumption that has been so widespread as to have become practically universal among educated men today that the machine myth has somehow eliminated not only the necessity, but even the possibility of our thinking of Ultimate Reality in personal terms. We have rather accepted the idea that the transition from personal terms to impersonal mechanistic terms was a step nearer ultimate truth. And all this has been possible because we have failed to see that the idea of the universe as, at bottom, an impersonal mechanism was just as truly a myth as any of the cosmogonies of primitive folk.* It is quite possible, when we have come to think the whole matter through in the light of the essentially mythical character of our mechanistic thought motif, that we shall see that much of the conflict that has arisen between what we call science and what we call religion is due, not to any essential variance in the respective representations of truth which these two human disciplines produce, but rather to the myth forms in which we have sought to give our ideas imaginative value. It is also possible that we may find good reason to conclude

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that a myth form which does not permit us to make use of so meaningful and illuminating a conception as that of the Adventurous God, by that very fact, proves itself inadequate to carry the whole picture of Reality.

3

THE conclusion to which this argument is moving is not to disparage the results of our modern scientific methods of study, analysis, and generalization. However the results of this new method may disturb the placid equanimity of accepted philosophies, the new method of science has come to stay. Scientific method is far too powerful and useful an instrument for us to consider surrendering upon any grounds the control which it gives us over the forces of nature that surround us. This method of study represents one of the substantial gains that the human mind has won through the long travail of human history. Our argument does not even necessarily discredit the machine form of myth, provided we keep clear in our minds its limitations. Perhaps we need to come to a new appreciation of the significance of myth in the development of human thought. It is probable that we can never hope to escape from the necessity of using mythical forms to make our ideas dramatic and concrete. Just as the words that form the very elements of language are conventionalized picture images, so language at its best is only a system of crude symbols by use of which thought goes limping on its way. We shall always have to think and speak in picture forms. Whenever we undertake to make any idea

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vivid and concrete or give it imaginative or emotional value, we must resort to some more or less obvious picture symbolism. We shall always have to make use of myths.

The question that becomes really important, then, is the question as to what type of myth form will prove most satisfactory for the embodiment of our ideas about the world. And, with this, we come to the most serious criticism of the machine myth which we modern folk have practically universally adopted. As we have already remarked, the only way in which we can make some new and mysterious phenomenon which we have observed intelligible is to relate it in some way to our earlier experience. Anything which completely defies such comparison remains for us a baffling mystery. All philosophy is a result of the imperious urge inherent in all mental process to bring every item of experience into vital relation with every other item so that there shall be no odds and ends of experience left over. Sooner or later, if we follow out the impulsion of this intellectual demand, we will choose some picture form, some form of myth if you please, into which we will endeavor to fit all of the ideas about ultimate Reality that we possess. The earlier myth-forms broke down because they were inadequate. They left out too much. There were too many facts of experience that refused to fit in. The modern machine myth has won such wide acceptance because it has been more successful in fitting in some of the most troublesome phenomena which the older forms of thought apparently were not able to assimilate.

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The most serious criticism of the machine myth is that it represents, at best, only secondary human experience. We have nowhere, in all the range of our observation, any direct experience of a machine that brought itself into existence, without the action of any personal agency or that ran itself independent of personal effort or direction. Every machine with which any human person has ever had any experience has pointed back to some personality for its very existence and has been dependent upon personality for its being able to function at all. This is perhaps the chief reason why the machine form of myth can never prove satisfactory as a form for the organization of our ideas of ultimate Reality. Nothing that is invariably and inescapably a product and an instrument can ever satisfactorily serve as the pattern or picture of ultimate Causality.

Already we are seeing, among leaders in the field of physical science, the beginnings of a revolt against the dominance of the machine myth. Already we find men turning from the machine to some form of "organism" as the pattern upon which to build our modern picture of the universe. We only need to observe, here, that if we will follow the clue of this new trend in philosophy we will find ourselves picturing a world that will find the center and core of its meaning in the developing purpose and creative and redemptive experience of the Adventurous God.



*SOME IMPLICATIONS FOR CHRISTIAN
FAITH*

CHAPTER VI

NATURE AND GOD

WE CANNOT GO FAR IN OUR ATTEMPT to think through the meaning of experience upon the basis of our assumption of the Adventurous God without having to reckon with the question of what we can make of some aspects of experience that seem stubbornly to resist interpretation in personal terms. We cannot reflect very long upon the place that human life occupies in the vast system of nature without having many dark and sinister misgivings come to haunt us. Human personality seems so comparatively small and unimportant an element in the vast scheme of things, it looks like an enormous presumption to insist that the Spirit of the Universe can be greatly concerned about our human aspirations, let alone set them in the center of his purpose. There are times when we are considerably impressed by the skeptic's inquiry, What must cows think of the supreme object of existence? If cows could think, must they not conclude that the suns rise and set, and the planets hold to their orbits, and the whole mechanism of nature in its total operation pursues as its ultimate aim the perfection of bovine character? It undoubtedly does somewhat

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turn the point of this objection to observe that when we ask what kind of world cows would construct in their minds if they could think we begin by personalizing them. If cows could think, they would unquestionably conceive the universe to be what thinking creatures do conceive it to be, the product and expression of creative personality. Nevertheless the issue raised is one that we cannot evade.

For the purposes of religious experience we can, and often do, pass this question by and center our attention upon those aspects of experience that lend themselves most readily to personalistic interpretation. If our religious experience is to be vital we have to organize it in terms of personal relations. The history of all attempts to base religion upon an impersonalistic philosophy reveals the futility of that approach. In spite of our philosophy our religious aspirations sooner or later insist upon setting up anew those personal relations that we have thought to eliminate. Hence it is that a good many have undertaken to find a temporary truce in a tentative dualism, accepting the idea of an impersonal universe in those areas that do not impinge directly upon religious experience and strive to maintain faith in a personal God in the restricted area of traditional religious beliefs and attitudes.

We can, thus for a time, get along with an unresolved dualism. We can insulate our religious experience from our thinking about the structure of our total experience and so establish a temporary armistice. But such an armistice can never dictate the terms of a lasting peace.

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Sooner or later we must reckon with the seemingly stubbornly impersonal aspects of nature. While we may not be able, here, to resolve all of the problems that may be raised, we can, perhaps, discover some clues to possible interpretations of these troublesome aspects of nature in terms of our assumption of the Adventurous God.

1

THIS question is driven home to us most directly and inescapably in terms of the persistent problem of evil. We all recognize that a great deal of the evil from which we suffer comes upon us because of the deliberate choices of men. The stubborn and rebellious wills of human personalities that refuse to co-operate with the divine purpose is an unquestioned source of incalculable evil. This is the primary problem of religion. We can account for other evils as the consequence of our human ignorance and can reckon that the evils which we suffer due to our ignorance may become the spur to further investigation that will lead us into new understandings. We may add to this the idea of the disciplinary value of suffering. It is not at all clear that the highest human values could be assured if human life could be completely set free from all pain and suffering. It is quite possible that there are values that can be won only at the price of suffering. It is certainly true that we often find lives of singular beauty and worth that seem to have derived much of that which gives to them their highest value from the sufferings that they have borne. But, even

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after we have made every allowance of this character that we can in explanation of the Why of evil and suffering there still remains an enormous unanswered question. It was once possible to reckon the great major natural catastrophes, such as volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, tornadoes, thunderbolts, and floods as expressions of God's wrath upon the sins of men. Such judgments are so totally lacking in moral discrimination that such a solution raises more problems than it settles. Never since first the author of the Book of Job initiated that epochal argument have men been able to satisfy their conscience and intelligence with this all too simple solution. It is at this point that humanism finds its greatest encouragement. The operation of the forces of nature seems so totally indifferent to human values, the judgments of suffering and death which the physical environment in which we live continually visit upon us seem so completely lacking in ethical discrimination that we seem driven by an inexorable logic of events to conclude that the cosmos functions as a vast impersonal mechanism.

The simplest way out of our dilemma is to take refuge in some form of dualism. This was the direction taken by Hebrew thought. After the searching questions put by such penetrating minds as that which gave to us the Book of Job had destroyed the earlier equation of sin and suffering, under the influence of Persian philosophy the Hebrews introduced the figure of Satan. They never went to the extreme to which the Persians went in making the spirit of evil practically equal in power with

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the spirit of good, except for one last desperate leap of faith in an ultimate triumph of righteousness. Satan was always definitely subordinated to Jehovah and exercised his evil ministry subject to the limitations of Jehovah's will. Still Hebrew thinking had pushed the problem of evil back from the arena of human affairs and posited it in a conflict in the super-human sphere. Spinoza found it necessary to think of Reality as existing under two aspects, thought and extension. Plato could not posit ultimate Reality in Ideas without distinguishing between the creative form of the Idea and the formless Stuff upon which the Ideas operated. Kant could never get his world of Pure Reason completely into gear with the demands of what he termed the "Practical Reason." Hegel established himself essentially in this same neighborhood when he found himself entangled in an infinite recession of thesis, and antithesis, leading to a synthesis which, in its turn, as thesis discovered a new antithesis.

Moving in this same direction, Dr. Edgar S. Brightman, in *The Problem of God*, has offered what has proved to be a tremendously stimulating and provocative suggestion. He would find the solution of our problem in a stubbornly obstructive factor with which God himself must struggle in order to work out his purposes. He puts it in this way:

"There is in God's very nature something which makes the effort and pain of life necessary. There is within him, in addition to his reason and his active creative will, a passive element which enters into every one of his conscious creative

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states, as sensation, instinct, and impulse enter into ours, and constitutes a problem for him. This element we call the Given. The evils of life and the delays in the attainment of value, in so far as they come from God and not from human freedom, are thus due to his nature, yet not wholly to his deliberate choice. His will and reason acting on the Given produce the world and achieve value in it." ¹

In other words, to add another word from Brightman, "The Given explains why the Adventurous God *has* to struggle. The Given is God's eternal Cross."²

This, of course, only pushes the dualism that we seem to meet in experience back into the fundamental character of Ultimate Reality and writes it off as one of the insoluble problems of human thought. We may raise a serious question whether the parallel drawn between "sensation, instinct, and impulse" in the conscious states of human personality with the "passive element" in the divine consciousness which is termed "the Given" is close enough to be particularly illuminating. It is certainly possible to organize a human personality, through discipline and devotion to a masterful ideal, so that all the sensations, instincts, and impulses that enter into consciousness, or that exert influence on the subconscious mind are integrated in one unified and consistent personality. However rarely we human beings may attain unto this ideal of personal development, we shall find it difficult to think of God as falling short of that ideal which we are persuaded is a possible human achievement.

It is doubtful if we can ever accept so fundamental a

¹ P. 113.

² Personal correspondence.

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dualism as the final solution of our problem. The same imperious urge that drives us on toward the achievement of a completely integrated and consistent personal experience will never be content with a fundamental and ineradicable division in Ultimate Reality. It may be that we shall have to content ourselves with the conclusion that, with the limitations of our present knowledge and understanding, the best that we can do is to reckon this among our unsolved problems. There is this to say about Dr. Brightman's solution, it is possible upon this basis to face frankly the stubborn difficulty presented by the apparently impersonal aspects of experience and still think of life in terms of our relation to the Adventurous God. And as long as we can think of "the Given" or whatever it is that stands as the obstacle to the complete integration of life, as always controlled by God, there is good ground for hope. At the same time that we are baffled and perplexed in our efforts to work out a completely satisfying philosophy upon a personalistic basis we may take comfort in reflecting that a materialistic or mechanistic philosophy must have even greater difficulty in accounting satisfactorily for personal experience and the existence of values.

The problem of evil does not exhaust our difficulty. It offers us simply a direct personal introduction. The demands of vital religious experience seem to require that we think of the supreme objective embodied in the purpose of the Adventurous God as defined in terms of human personal values. We say that God has most clearly revealed himself in the personal life and experi-

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ence of Jesus, that his primary objective is the creation and conservation of personal values, and that, so far as we can see, he will find the climax of his achievement in the triumph of the Kingdom of God on earth and the growth of the Eternal Society of the Redeemed beyond the veil of death. This is a magnificent assumption that God as Supreme Person defines his purpose in terms of personal values and personal experience essentially similar to those which we discover in our human personal experience. The whole universe, in other words, we conceive to exist for the purpose of creating human personality and producing human society.

This is a tremendous assumption. When we come to study all the phenomena of nature it becomes exceedingly difficult to hold to this faith in the possibility of completely defining the purpose of God, or the dominant drive of the universe, in terms of personal and social values. The vastness of the physical universe compared with even the planet earth which is the arena of human experience, coupled with the immeasurable expanse of time compared to the brief interlude covered by the entire span of historic and prehistoric man, would seem to compel us to conclude that, whatever place human experience may occupy in the life of God, at least God must have other ends than the creation and conservation of personal values as defined in any conceivable system of divine-human fellowship.

We may as well acknowledge at the outset that when we begin to speculate about the character of the divine experience and the content of the divine purpose we are

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including in our field of speculation a range of experience that is far beyond our capacity completely to understand. Our immediate problem must be to come to some conclusions as to the character of purpose that we may conceive of God as holding for us. Whatever else may be included in his experience outside the range of personal values is a matter that, after all, does not greatly concern us.

To this we need to add one qualification. If we are to maintain our own loyalty to ideals and hold our course steady toward the achievement of values in both individual and social experience, we cannot think of God in any way that will relegate personal values to a minor place in his experience. We face here a demand that is essentially similar to the demand that leads us to assume that this universe must be so constituted that the same laws which govern the organizing faculty of human intelligence determine its essential structure. If we are to think at all, or to know at all, we must assume that this is a rational universe. In the same way, if we are to maintain our loyalty to value we must assume that the urge to the discovery and the conservation of value which we find so imperious in our human personal experience reflects a major drive of reality itself. To conclude, as the humanists would have us, that the universe outside ourselves is totally indifferent to our human quest for values means inevitably to give over our loyalty to those values. It is simply nonsense to expect mature intelligent persons to attempt to maintain an attitude toward life that finds no support in Ultimate

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Reality. If we are to continue our human venture, we must conceive of God as supremely concerned with the creation and conservation of the personal values represented in the achievement of character in individual human experience, and in the social values that are symbolized by the term, "the Kingdom of God." And, if we are to hold this conception of God, we must conceive of his wider interests, whatever their ultimate character may be, as not unrelated to his struggle to create and conserve personal and social values. The vitality of our religious experience and the worthfulness of the whole adventure of human living rest upon our conviction that all of life will find its most satisfying meaning in terms of the experience and expression of the Adventurous God.

2

WE may find some light for our problem by re-examining the character of our own personal experience and remarking the wide variety of forms in which the creative urge of human personality finds expression. We may venture to state without fear of serious contradiction that human personality finds the most satisfying form of self-expression in the creation and conservation of personal and social values. In the experience of parentage and the fellowship of the family, in the struggle for and attainment of character, in the development of a rich and many-sided and at the same time a completely integrated and balanced personal experience, in the co-operative adventure of character building in the com-

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munity, in the promotion of and co-operative struggle for such corporate ideals as are represented by community welfare, patriotism, world-brotherhood, and the Kingdom of God, in the varied forms of creative art, literature, painting, sculpture, music, and architecture, in work that meets real human needs and offers opportunity for the fullest exercise of talent—in such undertakings human beings find the deepest satisfactions and richest and most meaningful experience.

It is impossible to set limits to the variety of ways in which human personality seeks and finds satisfying self-expression. The farmer tilling the soil, the machinist tending his motors, the carpenter building houses, the chemist in his laboratory, the miner grubbing away in the dark underground—these are only a few of the ways in which men invest their lives with deep and overflowing satisfaction to themselves and genuine worth to society. If we are to compass all the forms of human self-expression in which men find real satisfaction, we shall have to extend our survey far beyond the range of that which we usually include in our thought of "work." We shall need to include all that men do by way of sport and recreation. We shall need to reckon on the forms of interest and activity to which men give themselves in pursuing what they are wont to call their "hobbies." We shall need to include in our survey all the manifold forms of fellowship and community experience that make up so large a portion of the total life of men and women. We shall need to take account of our human quest for novelty, our experimenting, our

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exploring, and all the vast range of expression of our inventive genius. Through all these infinitely varied forms of activity personality grows and develops and discovers richness and worthfulness of experience.

We shall never come at a completely satisfying thought of the character of the interest and range of the activities of the Adventurous God until we have taken account of the infinite variety of forms in which personality might seek and find satisfaction in self-expression. We may freely recognize that the vast expanse of the universe and the immeasurable span of cosmic time are beyond the compass of our finite understanding. It may well be that we shall never be able to define the ways by which all the varied forms of self-expression of the Adventurous God fit into and promote the creation and conservation of personal and social values as these values come within the range of our human experience. We may reckon that God has other objects which he seeks to attain besides the perfection of human personality and the building of the "Great Society." We may reckon that God may have his moments of pure fun, of cosmic sport and relaxation, always subject to the discipline and control of that ethical loyalty that is fundamental in his character. We may conceive of God as engaging in vast experiments, as sharing in our human experience of invention and discovery. We may humbly and reverently acknowledge that it is beyond the range of our finite intellect to attempt to compass the full orbit of the divine experience. And at the same time we can reckon that through these wider ranges of divine

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experience the Adventurous God is finding channels for the expression of manifold aspects of creative personality, and that through this infinitely rich and varied experience the life of God is eternally enriched even as our human personalities grow through all the ranges of our personal experience. We do not insist that it is possible to work out an exhaustive account of the divine activity. All that we contend for here is that there is nothing in the apparently impersonal aspects of experience that need restrain us from undertaking to think of life in terms of the manifold experience and infinitely varied forms of self-expression of the Adventurous God.

3

WE may, therefore, think of nature as the varied manifestation of the creative life of the Adventurous God finding self-expression in forms apart from but not unrelated to human experience. There is a persistent tendency in human thinking to look upon nature as the background or stage setting for the drama of human experience. This is the theme of all religious cosmologies, ancient and modern. From one point of view, this is only one of the ways in which men register their conviction that the struggle for personal and social values is of supreme importance in human experience. It may be possible for a few determined, rebellious, heroic souls to stand with Walter Lippmann in the face of a coldly indifferent universe and fight on for personal and social values. But, as we have observed above, in the long run if men generally should ever conclude that

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their highest aspirations and noblest impulses were matters of indifference to the objective universe, they would certainly turn from their pursuit and give themselves to other interests for the cultivation of which the world around them afforded a more congenial environment. It is a matter of life or death for the human spirit. The very principle of the struggle for existence which is assumed to be so significant in the evolution of the varied forms of life upon this globe compels us to cling to our faith. The fact that men, through all human history, have so persistently clung to their faith in these values in the face of so many indications that the universe may not be concerned about their aspirations is itself a consideration of major significance. There must have been real survival value in such a faith. In spite of all the superficial indications to the contrary, such a faith must correspond to something elemental in the structure of Reality. It must be a significant indication of a major truth that men do so cling to their faith in the Adventurous God who strives as at least one of the most satisfying forms of self-expression, to increase and conserve the highest values of personal and social experience.

We do not need to go to the extreme of insisting that all of the manifold activity of God must be directed toward the sole object of furthering our human venture. We need to cultivate a certain humility of spirit that frankly admits our inability, upon the basis of our present knowledge, to solve all the riddles of the universe. We may believe that God has many objects in

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the wide range of his purpose and an infinite variety of opportunities for the self-expression of the divine personality. And at the same time we may discover in nature a stage upon which the drama of life is to be played. The system of nature of which we human personalities are inextricably a part defines for us the conditions of our existence. It sets the limits to our knowledge and understanding and fixes the modes by which our developing personal experience can find expression. The mechanistic picture, as we have seen,³ is only one of an infinite variety of myth forms by use of which we have striven to organize our experience. This machine myth already shows signs of breaking down. The orderliness and regularity of process that have seemed to many the unmistakable marks of mechanism we are beginning to see are distinguishing marks of personality at its best. The caprice, the irrationality, the impulsiveness, and the general instability of purpose that have seemed the greatest obstacles to our thinking of nature as an expression of personality are not the characteristic marks of personality, but rather the indications of incomplete or abnormal personal experience. There is nothing in the apparently impersonal aspects of nature that inhibits us from undertaking to interpret life in terms of the experience and effort for complete self-expression of the Adventurous God.

Before we turn from this discussion of "Nature and God" we had better return, for a moment, to the point

³ Chapter V.

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at which we began our study of this subject, the consideration of the problem of evil. It may be, as we have already observed, necessary to admit that, with our present limitations of knowledge and experience, we can find no completely demonstrable solution of the problem. It may be that the best that we can do at present is to reckon that that which we term evil is either the result of the stubborn rebellion of human spirits who refuse to accept the conditions of fellowship and co-operation with the Adventurous God, or that it is the result of a deep unresolved mystery in the structure of Reality, something "Given" in the nature of God with which he must contend in working out his purposes. The important matter, after all, is that we should be able to establish adequate living relations with the universe. However dark and sinister the persistent shadow of evil may appear to us, there is another aspect of the problem that we must never forget. Experience has abundantly demonstrated that it is possible for a human spirit to face the direst calamity that can befall a human individual and come off victor from the encounter. Given courage of soul and unshakable faith in the worth of living and of the essential friendliness of the Spirit that hides behind the dark mask of evil, and human persons bring from the ordeal spirits refined, disciplined, and glorified. Whenever we are tempted to yield to bitterness or cynicism before the attack of evil we might well remind ourselves that so to yield is to confess defeat in a struggle in which we might have been splendidly victorious. One of the most convincing reasons for

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believing in God, even in the face of evil, is the fact that our souls derive the courage and strength and faith that makes victory possible from the discovery that when we strive for fineness of spirit with the hosts of darkness that league against us the Adventurous God is marching by our side, sharing all the blows that fall upon us, and leading us on to victory.

Further, no matter how we may fail to understand the total range of the divine purpose, we may strengthen our purpose and fortify our souls with the assurance that, so far as our human experience goes, the Adventurous God seems to be seeking, through our fellowship and co-operation, to realize the highest values of personal and social experience that we can conceive. As a matter of practical experience, nature *does* set the stage for our human drama. The varied forms and processes of nature *do* yield themselves, through our limited but steadily extending control over them, to the furtherance of our human aims. There is added significance to the whole human adventure of mastering and controlling the manifold forces of nature in the thought that when we take hold of the lightning, or seek to direct the functioning of the life-creating properties of the soil, or use brick or wood or stone or steel to fashion implements for human use, we are actually linking hands with the Adventurous God and entering into co-operative relations with him. Moreover, it is just as we most sincerely and whole-heartedly dedicate ourselves to the attainment of those personal and social values that we conceive to be the highest aim of life, and most com-

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pletely enter into co-operation with our neighbors in the pursuit of these high aims, that we become most keenly aware of the active presence and co-operative fellowship of God. Following this clue we are persuaded that we find most meaningful interpretation of those apparently impersonal aspects of experience which we are accustomed to call "Nature" by seeing in all the forms and processes of nature so many varied modes of self-expression and self-realization of the Adventurous God.

CHAPTER VII

THE SAGA OF THE ADVENTUROUS GOD

THE STUDY OF COMPARATIVE RELIGION has brought forth a wealth of new knowledge concerning the religious experience of men. It has, at the same time, added to the problems with which we must deal when we try to understand the meaning and value of religious experience. In this, as in every other line of investigation, very much depends upon the assumptions with which we begin our study. When we begin with the assumptions of the Behaviorist, we can learn much about religion as one of the characteristic forms of human behavior. But it still remains an open question whether we may not miss much that we need to take into account if we are to come to an adequate appraisal of religious phenomena. When we begin our study with the assumption of a mechanistically determined universe, we may discover much that is true about religion, but there will be much else that is equally true which we may never glimpse at all. When we begin with the assumption that religion is either a psychological defense mechanism or a sociological means for controlling subject populations, we are likewise likely

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to fail to arrive at a completely adequate notion of what religion really is. The contention of these chapters is that before we can say that we have taken account of all the data that must be taken into account, before we can come to final conclusions, we will need to approach the study of religions upon the basis of the assumption of the Adventurous God.

From this point of view the story of the manifold forms which religion has taken in the long chronicle of human history becomes a "Saga of the Struggle of the Adventurous God for Self-disclosure and for Co-operative Fellowship."

1

THE early Christians had a very simple solution for the problems raised by the study of comparative religion. To them all religions apart from the Jewish-Christian tradition were the fruits of demonic influence. The unlovely and repellant aspects of paganism they denounced forthwith as the manifest works of the devil. Those qualities in the old religions that seemed to parallel characteristics of the religion of Jesus they dismissed as deliberate imitations of the true religion fashioned by the demons to deceive men and lead them astray. For them there was just one alternative which every man must face. They called upon all men to forsake the works of the devil, including every form of non-Christian belief, and put their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. For "in none other is there salvation."¹

¹ Acts 4: 12.

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This simple solution is not so readily available for us today. For one thing, the social status of Christianity has radically altered. The early Christians were proscribed and persecuted by organized society. They were subject to every conceivable calumny. It was little wonder that they retaliated by a vehement repudiation of everything associated with the old paganism. It is probable that only such a course could have enabled them to maintain their existence in the midst of the all-encompassing paganism. Today Christianity is in the saddle. It is by considerable the largest numerically of the major religious groups. Practically the entire non-Christian world is under the political control of governments that are, at least nominally, Christian. This has been true for a hundred years. In the first flush of enthusiasm of this last epoch of missionary expansion, the Christian peoples adopted a somewhat patronizing attitude toward the non-Christian cultures. In serene confidence in the racial superiority of the dominant whites and the inherent perfection of western civilization, they faced the non-European races as men who were divinely commissioned to possess and rule the earth. Just as they gave the blessings of orderly government, educational opportunity, and economic progress to the subject peoples, so, likewise, they sent out missionaries to carry the light of the Gospel to the benighted heathen. It was obvious that the Christian religion was the only true religion. The unquestioned military and political dominance of Christian nations demonstrated that beyond equivocation. Enough of the Christian

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idea of stewardship and of social responsibility had taken possession of the souls of western people to make them keenly conscious of an obligation to Christianize the non-Christian nations. When you add to this the vivid and dramatic symbol of hell that had been luridly presented to their imaginations by a generation of revival preaching, you have altogether a strikingly vivid definition of the distinction between Christian and non-Christian religion. The picture of millions of men and women doomed to the everlasting fires for no other reason than that they had never had an opportunity to hear a preacher of the Gospel gave a peculiar urgency to the missionary motive of the last hundred years. The challenge to "evangelize the world in this generation" fired the imagination of young minds a generation ago and, coming as it did in the final stages of the economic and political expansion of Western Europe, of which the United States is culturally a part, it produced the most energetic and far-reaching epoch of expansion in Christian history.

Now, again, the social and political relationships between the nominally Christian nations and the non-Christian peoples is changing. Signs multiply that the period of unquestioned political suzerainty of white governments is at an end. The very missionary propaganda of the last century has played a considerable part in the awakening of the non-Christian peoples to a growing restiveness under foreign control and an ever-growing demand for political and economic independence. The period of geographical exploration and

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colonial expansion has definitely reached its term. The economic exploitation of culturally primitive races by the organized capitalism of Europe and North America is meeting with increasingly vigorous opposition. The increasing tension between nations arising out of the struggle for control of markets and sources of raw materials provoked the World War. The spectacle of the nations who had boasted of their progress and superiority, locked in an insane orgy of self-destruction motivated by the most sordid and materialistic greed and lust for power, awakened a haunting question throughout the East whether after all Western Civilization, including Western Religion, was the superior thing that it had been represented to be. The manifest failure of Christendom to practice the precepts of its own Gospel set the entire non-Christian world to wondering whether the Christian religion might not be after all only a futile dream. At the same time, the "acids of modernity" had been eating into the foundations of faith among the nominally Christian peoples. The failure of these western peoples to face squarely and honestly the issues raised by the development of modern industrialism and the clash of acquisitive motives with the ideals of the Gospel cut the nerve of conviction that gave life to their profession of allegiance to the Christian Gospel. The diligent propagation of the idea of open-mindedness and the holding of all conclusions as tentative pending the discovery of new evidence calling for a continually repeated revision and restatement of convictions began to permeate the mind of the West with a subtle but

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penetrating skepticism. The seemingly inevitable reduction of everything spiritual to the simpler terms of material forces demanded by the rigorous application of scientific method to the study of religion, together with the development of the study of comparative religion from a sociological and behaviorist point of view, resulted in a general questioning of the validity of the claim of any religion to a monopoly of truth.

We are thus compelled to face anew the question, What shall we make of religion? How shall we appraise the varied forms that religion has taken in human experience? Shall we undertake to intrench ourselves in the old tradition and stubbornly insist against all gain-saying that the religion of Western Europe and America is the only true faith? Shall we demand that all other peoples must utterly renounce the faiths they have known for ages and accept the version of Christianity that has been current in Western society or be doomed to endless despair? Shall we conclude that one faith is as good as another—for the Hindu, Hinduism, for the Chinese, Buddha or Confucius, for the Arab, Mohammed, for the African, his primitive animism, and in the end it matters little what form a man's religion may take? Shall we embark upon a venture of religious syncretism? Shall we conclude that all religions must contain some truth and yet none of the forms of religion now existing can possibly be ultimate or final? Shall we look for a new synthesis of religious cultures out of which we may expect will come a new world religion that is different from any religion men now know and

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yet somehow akin to them all? Or shall we accede to the demand of the humanists that we must give up every element of that which we have rather carelessly called "the supernatural" and content ourselves with stoic acceptance of an indifferent universe and find an outlet for our hunger for religious experience in an enthusiasm for the service of humanity? It seems clear that we cannot hope to have done with religion. In spite of the frantic appeals of some late-born moderns that we must look for some kind of scientific technique and a revived positivistic philosophy to eradicate religion ultimately from human experience, it seems clear that religion in some form will persist. How then shall we approach an estimate and interpretation of this baffling and yet persistent form of human experience and human behavior?

2

IN these pages we are exploring some of the possibilities of beginning our study of religion with the assumption of the Adventurous God. We have undertaken to explain religion upon all manner of differing assumptions. We have assumed that human behavior could be completely accounted for in terms of mechanical structure and conditioned reflexes. We have assumed that economic interests determine human conduct and that religion in all its forms of belief, ritual, and organization could be accounted for as a deliberately planned device of the ruling classes for maintaining an established economic and social order. We have explained religion in terms of the imperious drive of elemental human in-

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instincts like hunger and sex. We have rated religion as a psychological defense mechanism whereby the human organism, lacking scientific knowledge or method of control, seeks to adjust itself to an environment indifferent to human aims or human values. In all of these ways in which we have attempted to account for religion we have begun with the tacit and sometimes with the explicit assumption that the idea of God was to be classed among the products rather than among the sources of religious experience. We do not insist that these other approaches to the study of religion may not be valid, nor that they do not yield valuable insights into its character and meaning. We are simply contending that we are not ready to come to final conclusions about religion until we have explored the possibilities of approaching it from the standpoint of the assumption of the Adventurous God. We raise the question whether we may not, by the very nature of the assumptions with which we begin, rule out part of the evidence without which we cannot hope to arrive at completely adequate conclusions. We contend that we can never fully understand what religion is, or what it means for human experience, until we read the story of religion as a "Saga of the Struggle of the Adventurous God for Self-disclosure and Co-operative Fellowship" with men.

When we think of God as One who is like Jesus Christ, and begin to picture him after the pattern of the compassionate Father in the parable of the Prodigal Son, it becomes inconceivable that he could ever have abandoned the great majority of mankind to hopeless

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darkness in order to shower his blessings in an exclusive self-disclosure to a single tribe or people. The more we know of the religious history of other people, the more clearly do we discern the manifest presence of the revealing Spirit of God struggling for adequate self-disclosure in every form in which religion finds expression.

When, however, we recognize the presence of God in other religious cultures, we do not by that fact conclude that one religion is probably as good as another. We need to remind ourselves that, as long as men possess any degree of individual initiative or choice, as long as they are considered as being in any sense free moral agents, as long, in other words, as men are human, possessing those qualities which we find common in human experience, there must continue to be wide variations in the success which the Adventurous God will meet in his efforts toward self-disclosure, and in the response which he will win to his invitation to co-operative fellowship.

We may find in the experience of human parenthood an excellent illustration of what has happened in the history of religion. It very often happens in a family where there are a number of children that some of the children respond much more readily than do others to the parental discipline. It is conceivable that the parents may deal with all their children with equal impartiality and devotion. They may have held the same fine high ideals before them, employed the same methods in their training, and sought to realize essentially the same moral objectives in their character development. And yet

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other factors have entered in that markedly influence the outcome. The economic and social circumstances of the home environment change and subject the children to varieties of environmental influence. The innate characteristics of the varying individualities among the children present wide varieties of response to the parental training. It is conceivable that the devotion and care of the parents may have been given in even larger measure, if any discrimination may be discerned, to the wayward and rebellious or impetuous and undisciplined child than to those who prove themselves more tractable in spirit. No matter how varied the outcome in the lives of all the family, the same parental patience and discipline and devotion, the same desire to see incarnate in each child the resplendant dream which the parents have cherished for all the children is made manifest. So, in the long and varied history of religion, through all the varieties of organization or ritual or belief, through all the aberrations of moral or immoral customs, of social or unsocial conduct, through all the mutations of experience, through all the varying degrees of success or failure in discovering to human thought satisfying conceptions of God and incorporating in human behavior satisfying forms of experience, we trace the lines of the Majestic Saga of the Adventurous God.

When we undertake to read the story of religion in terms of the struggle of the Adventurous God for self-disclosure and co-operative fellowship, and recognize that this struggle has resulted in varying degrees of success in the infinite variety of forms which religion has

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taken, we can never be content with any merely superficial syncretism in religion. We cannot conclude that we shall find the universal truth of all religion by any process of sifting out from the multitude of forms which religion has taken those elements which seem to be common to all religions. This process of seeking the truth about religion by reducing all religions to a lowest common denominator is a process of abstracting that ultimately eliminates everything vital and distinctively religious. It is essentially the same process of reasoning whereby we have sought to reduce all the higher forms of human experience to the simplest possible terms, and then to reduce experience itself to purely biological reactions, and ultimately to reduce all forms of life to mechanical relationships or chemical equations. All such forms of attempted explanation are interesting examples of mental gymnastics but are not particularly illuminating for the problem that we have before us. We cannot be greatly impressed by any process of reasoning that begins by repudiating the validity of the reasoning process by which it has been formulated and by which it must be carried through.

If we are to understand religion at all we shall have to give attention to those distinguishing characteristics that have marked one religion as differing from others, quite as much as to those elements which all religions seem to possess in common. This is not to say that the unique and individualistic elements in the various religions are alone significant. The common elements cannot, of course, be overlooked. There cannot be any

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question that elements which are persistently appearing in religion in all or most of its forms must represent something vital in the character of the Adventurous God who is struggling for an adequate medium of self-disclosure. We simply insist that elements that are distinctive or unique in any religion may represent characteristics that the Adventurous God has been struggling to reveal and for whose disclosure the people among whom the particular religion under consideration has developed have afforded an unusually favorable opportunity. We shall certainly be impressed by those characteristics that, once they have appeared, seem, by the quality of life that develops under their influence, and by their tendency to persist through later changes in the structure and function of religious experience, most expressive of the character of the Adventurous God who is seeking through all the forms of religion for adequate self-disclosure. For one thing, we shall account of greatest significance those characteristics of religion that seem best to relate themselves to life as a coherent and consistent whole. We shall, for example, have to recognize that any tendencies to set religion over against other phases of human experience—setting faith over against reason or intelligence, or reducing religion to a form of individual mystical experience unrelated to ethical ideals or social problems, or defining religion exclusively in terms of social responsibilities or group behavior without regard to individual experience or belief—such tendencies we shall have to recognize as imperfect understandings of the

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self-disclosure which the Adventurous God is seeking to make through the religious experience of men.

3

WHEN we look back over the history of religion to discover, if possible, the direction of its development and the nature of its apparent objectives, some trends seem to stand out as significant. It seems to be perfectly clear that all forms of polytheistic belief are on the way out. The movements of philosophy and the requirements of science unite with the religious hunger of men in insisting that the total experience of men must be organized in one coherent system of things. If we are to have religion at all, it must be a religion that finds its center and object of worship in one God. A division of authority in the government of the universe, even such a hierarchy of graded authorities as most of the highly developed polytheisms eventually came to represent, has no place in the modern world. Even the rigidly restrained dualism of a God who must struggle with an eternally "Given" obstruction within his own nature cannot prove to be an altogether congenial inhabitant.

On the other hand, it seems equally clear that the human race will never be content with a religion that does not offer men assurance that it will bring to them the self-disclosure of God and lay upon them his imperious summons to co-operative fellowship. Those who are insisting today that we must have a religion without a God find themselves able to do so only by making use of such arbitrary definitions of the term "religion" as

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rob the concept of any really definite meaning. Moreover, we have seen worked out in human life the inevitable outcome of attempts to establish an atheistic religion. Buddhism began with the renunciation of any belief in God and ended by losing the human personality of its founder in a bewildering maze of manifestations of deity. Confucius faced the problem of God with profound agnosticism and left the people who accepted his philosophy as their guide to a life that is subject to the grossest and most irrational superstitions that have ever blighted a high order of culture and civilization. Looked at from one point of view, it seems clear that if men are denied a wholesome and adequate conception of God they will pin their faith to almost any substitute that they find ready to hand. The urge to worship, denied legitimate expression, works itself out in all manner of subterranean forms. Viewed from the standpoint from which we are suggesting that we approach the study of religion, it seems that the Adventurous God can never be content with a denial of the possibility of any self-disclosure. When men undertake to bar him out and, by the assumptions on which they base their philosophy or the character of their religion, refuse to afford him freedom in his efforts to disclose himself to them, he will still find ways of breaking through. We may offer him only dim and broken lights. But even through these dim and broken lights we dimly discern his face.

It seems also to be clear that the Adventurous God will not be satisfied with a religion that does not draw

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all the human race into one inclusive co-operative fellowship. Racial barriers must be transcended. Nationalism must be taken up into a more inclusive loyalty. Economic and social stratification must dissolve in a common human fellowship. A religion that can adequately relate itself to life as a whole must both conserve and enhance the values of personal experience. Because personality is at the same time a uniquely individual experience, and also both a social product and a creative social force, a religion that is adequate will continue to be both a profound individual experience and a creative socializing force, a medium for the self-disclosure of God and an agency for the creation and the functioning of co-operative fellowship.

No religion that is adequate can fail to come to grips with the problem of evil in the life of men. This problem cannot be met by any philosophy that minimizes the serious character of the problem or tends to dull the keen edge of moral discrimination. Neither can the demands of life be met by any philosophy that leaves men in doubt as to where the Determining Forces of Life stand on moral issues. The only possible outcome of a philosophy that looks upon the Ultimate Forces of Life as coldly indifferent to or blindly unaware of moral issues is moral anarchy and the disintegration of society. The whole history of religion points to the conclusion that the Adventurous God can be counted on to stand for the highest that men can discover and at the same time, through an identification of himself with humanity in the moral struggle, through the re-creative power of

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mercy and forgiveness, at no matter what personal cost, he is always back of every man who sets himself to turn from evil ways toward better things. A religion that is adequate will reveal the Adventurous God, paying the price for that redemption and rehabilitation of human character that is necessary in order to achieve a co-operative fellowship.

While the particular forms which Milton used to construct *Paradise Lost* may not capture the imagination and command the conscience of this generation as it did that to which he first presented it, in his selection of a theme for epic treatment his critical judgment did not lead him astray. No grander epic has ever been penned than the story which the history of religion reveals in its magnificent "Saga of the Struggle of the Adventurous God for Self-disclosure and Co-operative Fellowship."

CHAPTER VIII

GOD IN CHRIST

THE PERSONALITY OF JESUS CHRIST presents a perennial problem to all who strive to account for the facts of human experience. The modern world is very much inclined to be impatient with the formulas of traditional Christian dogma. The language of orthodox theology sounds like an alien tongue to the ears of the average man today. The difficulty is, of course, that the theology that has been accepted as authoritative by the Christian Church grew out of the attempt to explain the experience of the early Christians in terms of Greek and Hellenist philosophy. The dominant thought forms in which Christian theology found expression were fixed before the dawn of modern science. The rise of modern science has radically altered the forms in which the persistent problems of philosophy present themselves to modern minds. As a result, most of the effort to commend traditional theology and defend the orthodox formulas descriptive of Jesus fails to impress the average person today as dealing with vital issues or offering helpful solutions.

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On the other hand, all attempts to account for Jesus in terms of categories that identify him completely with ordinary human experience have equally failed. Renan writes a sentimental romance and loses himself in ecstatic eulogy. Middleton Murray calls Jesus a "Man of Genius" and, in spite of himself, feels constrained to use the most extravagant language to describe the character of Jesus. Wells classes him with the ten greatest characters of history and then places him so far ahead of the other nine that they scarce seem to walk in the same company. Numerous writers assert dogmatically that Jesus must have experienced sin in common with the rest of humanity, but when pressed for particulars fall back upon pure *a priori* argument. The challenge of the Fourth Evangelist, "Which one of you convicteth me of sin?"¹ remains unanswered. The very vehemence with which we insist that Jesus must be one of us is testimony to the degree to which he towers above us in spiritual stature.

We shall not attempt, here, anything like a complete analysis of his personality. Neither shall we undertake to resolve all of the problems that have been raised concerning the relations of Christ to God or the relative positions of divinity and humanity within his personality. As we have already observed, most of these problems need first of all an entire new definition in terms of the vocabulary and experience of men today. We are interested here simply to suggest that we shall not be able to account for Jesus in any adequate or satisfying way

¹ John 8: 46.

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until we begin to see his life as the most complete expression known to human history of the struggle of the Adventurous God for self-disclosure and for co-operative fellowship.

1

THIS seems to be the vital point of the apostolic affirmation that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself."² We need not agree in detail with all the ramifications of Pauline speculation. Much of his argument has little meaning for anyone not familiar with rabbinic dialectic or the peculiar philosophical problems that were flung up out of the crucible in which were fusing oriental mysticism, Hellenistic philosophy, and Judean apocalyptic. But there can be no question that Paul was echoing the common conviction of his fellow-Christians of the first century when he declared his faith that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself."

We have become so accustomed to think of Christianity in terms of an authoritative dogma and an imperial institution, that it is a little difficult for us to realize that there ever was a time when the Gospel did not possess the authority of an ancient tradition and an established institution. We forget that such a statement as this of the apostle that "God was in Christ" was written long before the church had assumed any such position of commanding authority as we have been

² II Corinthians 5: 19.

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accustomed to associate with our thought about it. No little of the criticism of Christian dogma goes upon the assumption that it is something that has been imposed upon the mind and conscience of men by the arbitrary authority of the church. While it is true that the authority of the church has been exerted to maintain an ancient tradition beset by currents of intellectual and social change, this picture of an arbitrary institutional authority creating dogma and coercing unquestioning assent simply does not fit the situation in which Christianity took its rise. Not until the time when Constantine seized the church and attempted to make it over into an agency for maintaining the integrity of his disintegrating empire did the coercive force of an authoritative institution become a factor in Christian history. And the main outlines of Christian theology had been formed long before the theologians were thus commanded as ministers of state.

This statement of the apostle becomes the more significant when we see it over against the actual situation which it was offered to explain. Jesus appeared among men with none of the favoring prestige of authority or social rank or institutional approval that often it is assumed must have operated to account for the development of Christian dogma. He came out of Galilee, a territory always suspect by the strict orthodoxy of the day. He was totally without the advantages of the formal education of the temple schools. While the whole Gospel narrative is undoubtedly colored by memories of the bitter antagonism of the authorities in

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later months, it is probable that the scribes and Pharisees looked askance at him from the first. He went about his work in a most unconventional manner. There was totally lacking from the circumstances of his life and ministry all of those external aids that seem so commonly assumed as the explanation of the origin of dogmatic formulas.

Here is a young village carpenter turned wandering teacher. He gathers around him a small circle of followers drawn largely from the ranks of fishermen, small town merchants, and minor public officials. He spends most of his time talking about what God must be like and what manner of life men should lead who would merit God's approval. These men keep company with him, listen to his teaching, observe his manner of living, catch something of the spirit in which he faces life, watch him as he comes into conflict with the ecclesiastical and political authorities of the day, see him done to death as a common felon. They find, as they keep company with him, that there comes to them, not more from his words than from himself, an increasingly clear understanding of what God must be like, a picture of God that seems to validate itself to them in their own experience. It offers the clue by which the whole of life begins to fall into one coherent and self-consistent picture. They find, in his presence, a growing sense of the reality of the presence of God. To be with him is to be reassured of God. They come increasingly to feel that to the degree to which they yield themselves to a vital and significant fellowship with him they experi-

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ence a real fellowship with God. When pressed to put into definite and concrete terms what God is like they can do no better than point to Jesus and say that whatever God is he is at least like Jesus. When asked in later years to explain Jesus their answer is, "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself."

This interpretation of the first followers of Jesus of the significance of his life fits in admirably with what he seemed to feel about himself. It is probably true that the report of Jesus' sayings which we have in the Gospels is colored somewhat by the reflection of the early Church upon the problem of the personality of Jesus. This is usually counted even more true of the Fourth Gospel than of the Synoptics. But, after we have made all allowances for the element of interpretation in the gospel narrative, there still remains the problem of accounting for this interpretation. The many attempts to maintain the thesis that Jesus never lived as an actual historical character have all fallen of their own weight. These attempts to explain the rise of Christian tradition on some other grounds than that of a real historical character have all required such fantastic assumptions as to make an infinitely greater demand upon our credulity than the acceptance of all the apocryphal legends about Jesus could possibly have done. No matter how we go about the analysis of the gospels, and no matter by what circuitous routes we approach our conclusions, we find ourselves coming out, sooner or later, at the point of recognizing in the Gospels valid and authentic reminiscences of the life and sayings of

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Jesus. The character that the Gospels present to us hangs together with the stamp of a living likeness.

The picture of Jesus presented in the Gospels clearly indicates that the center and core of his self-consciousness was a conviction that God was seeking for effective self-disclosure through him. He felt unquestionably that it was his mission in life to serve as the agency through which God might draw men into co-operative fellowship. Even as a boy, as Luke indicates in the brief episode of the temple visit, Jesus had come to feel himself devoted to God.³ It was a matter of surprise to him that his parents had not looked for him first of all in the temple. His answer to the first temptation, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God,"⁴ finds an echo in the Johannine saying, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me,"⁵ and reveals whence Jesus believed he drew sustaining strength as well as how he interpreted the significance of his own words and acts. His whole ministry is characterized by a persistent sense of a divine mission. "The Father hath sent me" is a phrase that seems to have been common on his lips. His frequent declaration of his purpose to "seek and to save that which is lost" reveals his pervading consciousness of the outworking through his life of a divine redemptive passion. The saying in John, "The Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works,"⁶ is clear definition of Jesus' sense of the relation he occupied to God. The agony in

³ Luke 2: 49.

⁴ Matthew 4: 4.

⁵ John 4: 34.

⁶ John 14: 10.

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Gethsemane reveals in vivid and unforgettably dramatic form the tremendous urgency of this divine mission, the terrible intensity of the struggle of the Adventurous God for self-disclosure and for co-operative fellowship.

This interpretation of the significance of the life of Jesus by himself and by his followers is corroborated by the testimony of present-day Christian experience. It is not only within the ranks of the organized Christian movement that Jesus is recognized as the most completely satisfying and humanly adequate revelation of God that men have ever seen. The influence of Jesus extends far beyond the boundaries of conscious and purposeful discipleship. There are a good many varieties of conception of the character of God current among different peoples today. Polytheism, albeit it is haunted by the omens of ultimate doom, still lingers in many quarters. Within the area of cultured society in which men and women are striving to orient their faith and philosophy with reference to the method and mood of science, among those who cling to a belief in some form of deity there are a good many varieties of form in which this deity and his (or its) relation to human experience is conceived. Perhaps the prevailing tendency is toward a vague and relatively meaningless abstraction. The "kind of oblong blur" which Pratt tells of finding in a prayer-meeting testimony.¹ There is considerable point to Lippmann's criticism of the God conjured up

¹ *The Religious Consciousness*, p. 200.

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by men like Whitehead and Wieman.⁸ We may seriously question whether the birth of such an idea of God, now that it is finally accomplished, is worth all the travail that preceded it.

We are not forgetting, either, what we have already remarked about the persistent demand of many who are out of patience with traditional religion that we must dispense with God altogether and construct a new religion without a God. Keeping all this in mind, it is tremendously significant that wherever in this world today the influence of the Gospel of Jesus has made itself felt in any effective way, whenever men think of God with any degree of definiteness, they think of him as a Being whose character is in all essentials like Christ. If we may borrow Bishop McConnell's phrase, having made the acquaintance of Jesus, it seems that humanity can never be satisfied again with anything less than a *Christ-like God*.

This fact may stand as a measure of the spiritual achievement of Jesus. It is a mark, also, of the achievement of the Adventurous God. There are, conceivably, many ways in which God may in some measure disclose himself. Men have discovered some aspects of his character in the beauty and order of nature. The history of human society and the varied forms of human experience bring their own disclosures. The bare fact of human knowledge and the marvelous romance of its growth and development tell us volumes concerning the

⁸ *A Preface to Morals*, p. 26.

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character of the underlying structure of things. There are revelatory values in the mystical aspects of religion. But, so far in all the range of the experience of men, the Adventurous God has found no form of self-disclosure, no means of drawing men into co-operative fellowship that can compare with Jesus Christ. As the writer of the letter to the Hebrews put it: "God who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his son . . . the express image of his person."⁹

2

WHEN we approach the study of religion from the point of view of the assumption of the Adventurous God, the whole Jewish-Christian movement assumes new significance. When Jesus remarked to the Samaritan woman that "salvation is of the Jews,"¹⁰ he was not necessarily indulging in an expression of racial superiority or national prejudice. He was simply observing what was demonstrably true, that the Jewish people had proved themselves to have developed to a high degree their capacity for spiritual insight, their genius for creative religious experience.

Here was a people possessed with extraordinary racial vigor. The character of their geographical habitat, the relations in which they found themselves to neighboring peoples, and the circumstances of their history effectually estopped them from following out the ordinary ave-

⁹ Hebrews 1: 1-3.

¹⁰ John 4: 22.

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nues of national development. The limitations of resources on the semi-arid ridge of Palestine made impossible the development of a luxuriant material culture. The rough mountainous terrain made any effective national unity difficult and prevented the consolidation of a base for political empire. The absence of harbors on the Mediterranean coast stood in the way of trade expansion, which has always proved the highroad to empire. The bitter struggle of the Israelite clans among themselves and with rival tribes for the possession of the springs and valleys and hilltop fortresses of the land developed an intensity of local patriotism that imperiously demanded some adequate outlet in self-expression. When this intensive loyalty to the traditions and God of Israel met with overwhelming disaster, as the political life of Israel was destroyed in the struggles of the rival empires of Babylon and Egypt for world dominion, it created a spiritual problem of cosmic magnitude which must find some adequate solution or Israelitic culture itself was doomed.

The appearance of a succession of men peculiarly gifted in spiritual insight just at the time when the crushing out of the national life of Israel was threatening to overthrow their faith and overwhelm them in that anonymity in which most of the minor cultures and peoples of the ancient world were absorbed in the all-devouring empires of Egypt, Babylon, and Rome, opened to the intense patriotic spirit of the Hebrews a new avenue for expression and development. No purely materialistic or naturalistic philosophy can successfully

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account for the succession of great prophets that gave Israel a new soul birth. The only parallel comparable known to history is the appearance of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle just at the time that the Greek city states were being annihilated in the throes of travail that gave birth to the Roman Empire. The only ultimately adequate solution of the problem, either of Greece or of Judea, is to read their stories as chapters in "The Saga of the Struggle of the Adventurous God for Self-disclosure and Co-operative Fellowship." The prophets of Israel were men passionately devoted to Israel. They cherished her traditions and believed in her destiny. This belief in her destiny was, in their thinking, rooted in a profound faith that in her history they could discover the immediate presence of God. When her national development crashed against the rival ambitions of Egypt and Babylon and the masses of their fellow-citizens were saying that the political disaster was evidence of the failure of the God of their fathers and the futility of their traditional faith, the prophets were compelled to face spiritual realities. Out of the agony of those years came the discovery of a new faith transcending and vastly ennobling their traditional beliefs and marking out the direction of religious development for centuries to come. In these prophets of Israel the Adventurous God found his golden opportunity. Through them he made the most significant disclosure of himself and the greatest advance toward co-operative fellowship with men of which we have any record, saving only that which came through the life and in-

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fluence of Jesus. Indeed, the life of Jesus was not a separate development, but rather the grand climax of the drama of Hebrew religion.

From this point of view the Bible assumes a new significance. Very much that is said today in criticism of the Bible and of Bible-centered religion goes upon the assumption that the Bible has been imposed upon human thinking by some form of arbitrary external authority. It seems to be taken for granted that once the support of arbitrary and irrational authority is removed this Bible will inevitably fall of its own weight. No very clear or consistent attempt is made to account for the existence of the authority and influence which the Bible has unquestionably enjoyed. Now, as a matter of history, the Bible has won its way to the position it now occupies by the sheer force of its own inherent worth. No one who has even a superficial acquaintance with the way in which the Bible came into existence will be much impressed by the arguments of those who contend that it could not continue to impress intelligent men were it deprived of the support of the authority of ecclesiastical dogma and institution.

What we have in the Bible, in brief, is a transcript of the story of the spiritual development of the Hebrew people. Whatever authority the Book possesses is, so far as its relation to the beliefs of men is concerned, the authority of tested experience. It is because the description of religious development and religious experience which it offers meet response in the current religious life of men, because the procedures it outlines when followed

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out reproduce in satisfying fashion among living men the religious experience which it ascribes to the characters in its narrative, that men today still feel the influence of its authority.

Whatever life or influence the Bible today possesses, it derives not from any arbitrary external authority, but from the quality of life and experience that is reflected in its pages. It lives and continues to command the mind and conscience of men today because the same life speaks through its pages that men find pressing for adequate expression in their own spiritual hunger and religious experience. Through the Bible, through the religious history of Israel, through the prophets and preeminently through Jesus Christ, we find most articulate and satisfying expression of the yearning of the Adventurous God for self-disclosure and his struggle to win men to co-operative fellowship.

3

WE sometimes meet the objection that, in such a world as modern science seems to reveal to us, a world of ceaseless growth and change, we cannot rightly conceive of any revelation or discovery of truth as final, no matter how satisfying it may seem to be at the moment. Hence, we may legitimately expect that the religious ideas of Jesus will be transcended by later developments in religious experience. It is always conceivable that a greater prophet than Jesus may arise to lead men on to greater discoveries of truth and point them to still better ways of life. The implication, never quite explicit, but

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all too often apparent, is, of course, that any variation from Christian tradition that may appeal to our fancy today may be justified as an advance over Jesus' necessarily limited and inevitably outgrown understanding.

In the first place, we need to remark that change is not necessarily progress. In the light of the long experience of men finding spiritual satisfaction and continued stimulus to spiritual growth in the life and words of Jesus, the burden of proof is heavily upon those who profess to offer a better way than the way of Jesus. This is a burden of proof that, thus far, we make bold to say, no one has had the courage to attempt to carry. Beyond that, the whole argument that because this is a changing world we may very well anticipate religious experience to advance beyond Jesus as culture and civilization goes forward is rather pointless speculation. For one thing, the whole proposition may be seriously challenged upon its very premises. It is not at all inconsistent with the idea of a world of change and progress that men may not at times make discoveries of principles and truths that are not invalidated by later development or discovery. Euclid lived a good long while ago, even longer ago than Jesus, and yet all the progress that has been made in the centuries since his day has not invalidated his contributions to mathematical knowledge. In fact, the whole science of geometry since his day has been little more than a succession of commentaries upon his work. The quality of the spiritual insight of Jesus and the character of his teaching was such that we need experience no difficulty

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in seeing in him a disclosure of the character of God and a definition of his purposes that we may conceive of as governing human thought and life today just as truly as they did in the first century. Moreover, we may grant the whole case of those who argue that it is possible there may arise a greater than Jesus, and we shall still find ourselves faced with the responsibility of following Jesus until some clearer revelation actually appears. We cannot hope to progress beyond the given light unless we are willing to follow the light we have.

Whatever disclosures of God the future may bring to us, it seems clear that he will still be for us at least all that Jesus was. No idea of God that is less than Christlike can hope to satisfy the hunger of human hearts, once they have had a vision of Jesus. No disclosure in the future that is less than Christlike can satisfy the passion for self-disclosure of the Adventurous God. Whatever new requirements the religion of the future may lay upon men, it will at least require a sincere and sustained devotion to the ideal of Christlikeness in character. No pattern for individual or social conduct that is less than Christlike can ever meet the demands of a developing human society, or the desire of the Adventurous God for co-operative fellowship. Whatever forms the religion of the future may take, it will certainly be at least such as would naturally grow out of the increasing conquest of the Spirit of Jesus over the life and thought and faith of men. For it is through the developing religious experience of the Hebrew people, under the creative stimulus of the prophets as de-

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scribed in the collected and sifted literary deposit of the Bible, and coming to its climax in the life and teaching of Jesus that the Adventurous God has most clearly disclosed himself to human experience and is most effectively drawing men into co-operative fellowship.

CHAPTER IX

THE ADVENTURE OF THE CROSS

IT HAS BECOME ALMOST A COMMONPLACE to remark that the cross is the heart of the Gospel. Try as we will, we do not seem to be able to get out from under its shadow. In spite of the very obvious difficulties that those who are struggling to combine liberalism with lip service to orthodoxy have in trying to make anything out of it which will be palatable to the modern mind, no one has quite been able to eliminate the cross and have anything resembling the Christianity of the Gospels left. The many attempts to classify Calvary with Socrates drinking the hemlock and similar examples of human martyrdom to truth or conscience leave us with a sense of the inadequacy of the parallel. There is a quality that is common to all courageous self-sacrifice. There is that, however, about the death of Jesus that never will let us rest content with pigeonholing it as just another martyrdom. Even as Jesus himself bursts through all merely human categories, so the death of Jesus haunts us with the sense that the cross must be something more than just another brave and tragic human death. In spite of the fact that nowhere does

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traditional orthodoxy seem more alien to the modern mood than in its interpretation of the meaning of the cross, the cross persistently gets in our way. We cannot escape it. It will not let us rest in the snug sanctuary of our humanistic philosophy. Try as we will to put other tags upon him, Jesus persistently comes back to stand before us with the somber shadow of the cross upon him. The crucifixion has burned itself into the memory of the race. It may well be that we will find that we cannot close our reckoning with Calvary until we have read its story as the grand climax in the Saga of the Adventurous God.

1

AMONG other things, it is probable that one reason the Christian doctrine of atonement meets with so little appreciation today is the fact that this generation, as compared with some that have gone before, seems to be singularly lacking in a sense of sin. The keen edge of moral discrimination seems to have dulled. Perhaps, in part, this is due to the general unsettlement of traditional notions that has seemed to plunge all the world into a chaos of uncertainty. While Einstein's theory of relativity is probably only remotely related to this universal doubt, it may very well stand as a particularly dramatic illustration of it. And, if the trends of development which it seems either to be initiating, or at least to which it is giving increased momentum continue, it may well prove ultimately to be one of the most influential forces modifying the thinking and beliefs of the modern world.

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When we seem to have slipped all our moorings and the fixed stars by which we have hitherto confidently plotted our course seem swept away in wild erratic orbits, we seem to lose all valid and veridical standards by which to adjudge the moral worth of any particular act. When moral distinctions disappear the need for an atonement evaporates and in the cross we can see nothing more than just one more illustration of the pitiless indifference of the sum of things to any human sense of moral difference.

It is even more likely that the dulling of the fine edge of moral discrimination that has come upon us is due to subtle but radical changes in economic stresses and social cleavages which the headlong industrialization of life has thrust upon us. The world our fathers knew was a world whose social patterns were pretty definitely fixed and generally recognized. Religion, to the generation that responded to the appeals of Finney and Alexander and Moody, represented certain quite clearly defined issues in any average community. Sinner as well as saint recognized them and accepted moral judgment without much question upon the basis of his meeting or evading these issues. The development of mass production and the progressive mechanization of the routine processes of living have created radically new social situations which confront the Ethic of Jesus with new issues, or at least with the old issues presented in new and not always readily recognizable forms. We shall need to approach the critical analysis of this new complex situation with all the powers of intelligence that we have

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developed, making use of whatever new techniques scientific methods may have given us. We shall need, however, to bear in mind that we shall have to reckon with the presumption that the human race must have learned some things concerning the basic principles of human association through the long travail of the centuries. All the years before Freud and Watson came upon the scene were not necessarily totally wasted years, even though they were not illumined by their marvelously simple magic formulas. We shall need to reckon with the proposition that, until a new philosophy of life can offer pretty tangible and satisfying evidence that it proves out in more meaningful and more worthwhile living, the way of Jesus has a right to command our interest and careful investigation. We shall not come to terms with life today until we have analyzed and tested its situations and faced the issues that they raise when confronted with the Ethic of Jesus. We shall probably find that the outcome of this development will be, not a dulling, but a sharpening of the edge of moral discrimination. And with it, through the social technique which is being developed with the increasing application of scientific method to life processes, will come a new intelligence in the exercise of the machinery of social control that should mark a distinct and radical moral gain.

Here, again, we need to remind ourselves of the way in which a stage setting may sometimes obscure the play. In most of the forms in which traditional orthodoxy has sought to explain the cross the dramatic scene on Cal-

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vary is presented to us over against the backdrop of Hellenistic philosophy, or of oriental mystery plays, or of Roman jurisprudence. These were the familiar settings in which men of the first Christian centuries were accustomed to see the play presented. Today we need to reconstruct the setting for the play. We need to see the drama of the cross enacted over against the backdrop of modern scientific thought and the social struggle of a world enduring the growing pains of industrialization. When seen in this light the whole story acquires a new significance and the cross becomes, instead of an enigma to be solved, the key to the solution.

Meanwhile, the way in which the inexorable logic of events is forcing us to face the stark and grim realities of our social situation will go far toward bringing us to a new appreciation of the meaning of the cross. The bitter disillusionment with which we have seen our grand theories of uninterrupted and invincible progress done to death, the wholesale orgy of sordid realism that has gone silly drunk with the thrill of shocking our encysted Victorian idealism by revelations of the crude vulgarism and barbaric ruthlessness we thought we had covered over with the silk and satin mummery of our conventionalized Christianity, the experience of living in a world abounding in material resources, with machinery of production keyed to the highest pitch known to history, and yet faced with the complete collapse of our whole system of material values, the increasing menace of unemployment, revealing ominous portents of a radical breakdown of our whole economic system, the in-

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creasing disregard of law and the increasing boldness with which organized crime bids defiance to established government, threatening, in the minds of many thoughtful persons, the very subsidence of civilization—all this is driving us to a new reckoning with the stubborn and intractable enemy that everyone must fight who dares to stand for the ideal. The glaring contrast of wealth and squalor, of productive processes outrunning the processes of distribution, of bursting granaries and starving populations, of amazing advances in the application of science to the processes of exploitation and equally amazing stupidity in facing and grappling with problems of human welfare, of the seeming impotence of society to harness intelligence to enthusiasm for ideals and so work out a better world—all this may help us to a new appreciation of what the cross may reveal when we see it as the climactic moment in the struggle of the Adventurous God for self-disclosure and co-operative fellowship.

2

WHATEVER may be our conclusions concerning the significance of the Cross, we cannot fail to recognize in it one more illustration of the dark and somber shadow that hovers ominously over all of life. We may be able to shut our eyes to realities and dream ourselves for a season into a comforting oblivion, but sooner or later comes a harsh awakening. After Mrs. Eddy had successfully established the blessed revelation that "All is Good" she found herself caught inescapably in the

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toils of "malicious animal magnetism." We simply cannot, without grave peril to our sanity and certain shipwreck to our moral venture, attempt to shut our eyes to the dark and seamy aspects of experience. "Every day in every way" is a soothing genteel tea-time parlor philosophy; but the days since October, 1929, have given the patent lie to it every hour of the twenty-four. The shadow still casts its somber pall upon us.

We ought not, however, to be too hasty to conclude, because the shadow broods so darkly over us that there is an end of faith in God. Before we leap too hastily to the conclusion that it is hopeless to attempt to reconcile the fact of evil with faith in God, we had best make sure that we understand what are our alternatives. There seems to lurk back of most of the emphatic denials of the possibility of continuing to believe in God in the face of the unquestioned fact of evil the strange notion that, once we have gotten rid of God, we have gotten rid of the problem. Now, as a matter of fact, nothing could be farther from the truth. We do not get rid of the problem of evil simply by denying God. All that we actually accomplish is to throw away the one clue that offers any hope either of making any sense of the riddle of experience, or of discovering any satisfying way in which to come to terms with life.

Suppose that we throw over God. Let us consider where that leaves us. It leaves us solitary and alone, caught in the toils of an inexorable fate. For the problem of evil still remains. Here we are with all our dreams, all our unrealized ideals, all our futile hopes, all

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our tragic disappointments. All of the cruel suffering, all of the agony of pain, all of the bitter disillusionment, all of the haunting, maddening meaninglessness of existence still remain. We stand creatures so constituted as to be incapable of harmonious adjustment either with ourselves or with our environment, doomed like a motor with an unbalanced flywheel to shake ourselves into moral chaos by the sheer intensity of the tensions for which we can find no release. Getting rid of God does not get rid of the problem. It only leaves it all the more hopeless of solution. Getting rid of God does not unravel the mystery of evil. It only renders it the more dark and sinister.

Whatever else the cross may mean, it clearly means this, that the problem of evil is a problem that we share with the Adventurous God. Here is the truth in Dr. Brightman's daring speculation that there must be a "Given" something in the very nature of God, something in the structure of Ultimate Reality which even he is powerless to change, and with which he must struggle to achieve his ends. This solution, like most other attempted solutions of the problem of evil, is not after all so much of a solution as it is a new definition of the problem. It may be a help toward the working out of a workable philosophy of life to see the problem in a light that reveals God as sharing with us in our struggle to master evil. It does not, however, solve the problem of evil to explain it in terms of something "Given" to God. This only pushes the mystery back into the inner life of God and leaves, if anything, a

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greater and more insoluble problem than we had at first.

We do not contend that the cross offers a complete solution to the problem of evil. We only suggest that it will greatly hearten us in our moral struggle to discover, through the experience of Jesus on Calvary, the presence of the Adventurous God, entering the lists in the same contest in which we are engaged. It is Buddhism that has given the world as its characteristic symbol a figure seated aloof, remote, detached from the welter of life, absorbed in serene and passionless contemplation. The symbol of Christianity is the cross, and on the cross a dying Lord. The significance of the cross to the Gospel is the insistent faith that the figure upon the cross was more than merely one of the sons of men caught, like numberless of his fellows, in the cold, indifferent cruelty of social stress and struggle. The figure on the cross is more than Jesus of Nazareth, the Carpenter teacher of Galilee. That figure has grown to cosmic dimensions. The cross has become more than one solitary incident in the tragic confusion of human experience. The cross has become an eternal fact, inextricably a part of the structure of reality. The cross has become the final revelation of the character of God. For through the experience of the tragic figure on the cross the Adventurous God has completely identified himself with men in their moral struggle. He has plunged into the very thick of it. He is bearing the brunt of it. He is paying the price of it. He has come to grips with life in an epic and decisive moment. And,

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in the light of that which followed Calvary, more and more clearly do we see how through the Cross the Adventurous God has won the Grand Triumph of the Ages.

3

IN the last analysis, it is not a theoretical but a practical solution to the problem of evil that the Gospel of Jesus, with its climax in the story of the cross, offers us. This is that which most vitally concerns us. If in the Cross we discover the Adventurous God having it out, once and for all—or perhaps we had better say, eternally and for all—with life, then, however we may be perplexed to resolve the mystery that it involves, here at least is light by which we can see our way also to come to grips with life. If the cross is a revelation of what it means to God to have men like we are choose to live unworthily, or drift in cowardly evasion of responsibility, then in the light of that discovery we can see quite clearly where we must stand if we stand with God. If our experience seems to indicate that taking a stand for God instead of simplifying rather tends to complicate the problem of living, creating new difficulties, calling for greater courage, provoking new conflicts, we are not dismayed. The Adventurous God has borne his cross. The exhortations of the humanists that we should cultivate a stoic fortitude in the face of a coldly indifferent universe strikes us as utterly superficial and inadequate. That kind of philosophy has never really come to grips with life. Clearly that is not the way to courageous and valiant living. "If any man will come after me,

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let him deny himself and take up his cross, and follow me,"¹ said Jesus. In the Cross there lurks suffering and tragedy. But the Cross is more than tragedy. The Cross is the Magnificent Triumph of the Adventurous God. The Cross is the crowning achievement of divine self-disclosure. Once having looked at Calvary, no vision of God that does not contain a cross can ever more appeal to human hearts. The Cross is the ultimate victory of the Adventurous God wooing and winning by the irresistible compulsion of sacrificial love the hearts of men to co-operative fellowship.

¹ Matthew 16: 24.

CHAPTER X

THE ETERNAL FELLOWSHIP

WE ARE PRONE TO DRAMATIZE LIFE. We are always trying to unravel the outlines of the plot. We are always looking for the villain and trying to identify the hero. Perhaps this is why the devil has so persistently intrigued our imagination. He helps sharpen the dramatic structure of experience. Perhaps success in life is measured better by the degree to which we succeed in casting ourselves for heroic parts than any other test. Certainly the picture of life presented by the Bible is replete with dramatic quality. As we have observed, it is in the cross that this drama comes to its magnificent and tremendous climax. No one can read through the narrative of the life of Jesus and not feel himself caught up by the swing of it. It sweeps us off our feet. It sounds like a fanfare of trumpets to our souls. Once we have seen Jesus facing the cross, and hanging on the cross, and triumphing through the cross, we know that we have caught the key to the meaning of things. The mystery begins to clear. The riddle begins to make sense. Now we know why it is good to be alive, and why it is good to take up the gauntlet and enter the

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lists and play the heroic part. Now we begin to understand what it is that life would demand of us. Through every avenue of approach to our understanding and experience the Adventurous God is calling us to share with him the great adventure of building an all-inclusive fellowship, a fellowship that shall become, in the long last, an Eternal Fellowship.

1

WE shall have to reckon with those who would interpose the question whether we are justified in thus dramatizing our experience. Does the dramatic form, which has so captivated our imagination, really offer us any insight into the essential structure of reality, or is it purely a figment of our imagination, a convenient form in which to catalogue and pigeonhole experience, but altogether lacking in any real objective significance? It is certainly a most intriguing play—but is it still nothing but a play? It does seem rather odd, if all this dramatic form that has seemed to discover such meaning in an otherwise purposeless chronicle of experience should be all illusion, a construct of our mental processes without any objective reference, it seems odd, to say the least, that essentially the same outlines of dramatic structure should appear in every literature. This is true whether we can trace any direct influence of dramatic criticism or not. It is independent of the superficialities of particular art forms. Whether we take the seven-act scheme of the classic Greek drama, the cycles of speeches in the Book of Job, the five-act Shakespearean drama, or

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the simplified three-act form that is popular with us today; whether we take the formal drama, or the heavy trilogy of novels now coming back into popularity, or a relatively formless dramatic poem, or the shorter novel forms: the sequence of plot development falls along essentially the same lines. There have been not a few dramatic critics who have insisted that this pattern of dramatic structure is not an artificial creation of the artist. It is not something that the artist has created, but rather something that he has discovered. A creative writer is as much a seer as an artist. Dramatic form is fundamental in the structure of Reality.

Whether we are ready, at first leap, to go this far or not, it does seem to be clear that the dramatic form is written into the structure of our thinking processes. Whether we are ready immediately to accept the conclusion of the dramatic critic that all existence is essentially dramatic and that experience best yields meaning when it is consciously cast into dramatic molds, it seems to be true that human thinking processes follow naturally the patterns of dramatic structure. If we attempt to think about life to any purpose, it seems that we must think dramatically. That is to say, we must think in terms of purpose or ultimate objective, of organization of experience conditioned and determined by that objective, of forces which threaten to obstruct or thwart our purpose, of struggle rising to a climax in which the forces, the direction of whose operation was determined by the crisis of the plot, work themselves out to inevitable conclusions.

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Whenever we raise the question of purpose, as applied to the sum total of Reality, we immediately raise the old bugaboo of anthropomorphism. After the somewhat extended discussion of this point above,¹ we need pause here only long enough for a single observation. If we are to rule out of court all patterns of reality that bear any of the stamp of human personality, we shall have to stop thinking altogether. Thinking is a characteristic form of human behavior, and whatever pattern we may use to picture Reality, it will still be the product of human mental processes and a reflection of human experience. Purpose is no more a mark of human intelligence than is order, or logical consistency, or the idea of cause and consequence, or the pure abstractions of mathematics. All of these pattern forms are human patterns. Any picture of reality drawn upon the basis of any of these patterns is certain, just to the extent to which it reflects the pattern, to be an anthropomorphic picture.

As we have already observed, the question of anthropomorphism ultimately simmers down to a question of whether we will use the total experience of human personality as a pattern for reality, or whether we will attempt to get along with an abstracted fragment or a truncated form of that experience. In the face of all the mental gymnastics and perennially repeated intellectual hara-kiri of the mechanists and naturalists and humanists, the human mind clings tenaciously to the

¹ Chapter IV, page 14.

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conviction that, however darkly hidden or dimly discerned, there is purpose in the scheme of things, and however poorly we may read the lines, the plot moves on toward a grand denouement. The Christian Gospel faces life confident that in the life and death and triumphant Spirit of Jesus we have the clue to the outline of the plot. Through all the manifold forms of existence that we have tried to survey and catalogue through the discipline of science, and through the infinitely varied and complex structure of individual and social human experience the Adventurous God is eternally struggling for completely satisfying self-disclosure and self-expression. The more we study history and reflect upon our experience, the more evidence do we discover which seems to confirm the insight of the Gospels that, at least so far as it relates to our human destiny, the purpose of the Adventurous God, the dominant motive that furnishes the major drive of the plot, the grand objective toward which the whole play moves forward, is the creation of an all-inclusive co-operative fellowship, a fellowship that will unite all the diverse elements of human society, triumphing over all those barriers of racial inheritance, social caste, national prejudice, and economic opportunity that we have allowed to divide the race into mutually distrustful and antagonistic groups, giving complete expression to that fundamental unity that marks "of one blood" "every family of earth"; a fellowship in which the Adventurous God will share to the full with men the consciousness of the essential kinship of the human and the divine; a fel-

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lowship that shall transcend the barriers of time and bring together into one transcendent social experience men of every generation, an Eternal Fellowship—that which was the central theme of Jesus' preaching, the Kingdom of God.

2

THE long story of human history persistently follows certain motifs through all the infinitely varied and changing patterns of social structure. For one thing, human society seems characterized by a persistent expansiveness that has continuously burst through established boundaries and set clans and tribes and peoples ever and again upon the march. We have commonly interpreted this swarming of the peoples in terms of population pressure and the exhaustion of the resources of the previously inhabited area. This point of view unquestionably yields valuable insights into some of the powerful forces that condition social structure and development. We cannot be content, however, with this as a complete account of human society. There has seemed to be a restlessness within human life itself, an impatience at all boundaries and limitations, the lure of a shining imperial dream forever leading on toward larger units of social organization and wider areas of experience.

It is significant that, as soon as leaders appear in human groups who are conscious of the responsibilities of leadership, they begin to fall under the lure of this imperial dream. The early kings of the city states of the lower Tigris-Euphrates valley, who lorded it over

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the valley centuries before Babylon established her undisputed sway, called themselves "Kings of the Four Corners of the Earth." The pharaohs, forever leading their hosts up out of the valley of the Nile to wrestle for the prize of empire with the giants of the North; the Assyrians crushing with blood and iron all the lesser peoples of the nearer East and juggling peoples about in crude experiments of racial assimilation; the Medes pouring down out of the arid steppes of Iran to mark out the first successful pattern of organized and administered empire; Alexander wandering about the earth, looking for more worlds to conquer, like a half-grown boy obsessed by the wanderlust; Rome welding all the races and peoples of the Mediterranean basin into one homogeneous civilization; Attila and Genghis Khan trampling down all racial and national boundaries; the Spanish conquistadors scouring the seven seas to found new colonies for Spain; British merchant adventurers searching out markets and new supplies of raw materials in all the unclaimed areas east or west and deluging two continents in a bloody struggle with France for the mastery of the globe; successive conferences of premiers of the dominions boldly breaking up the structure of world-empire beaten out upon the anvil of war by the sword of imperial ambition to build out of the fragments a new structure of empire after the pattern of a commonwealth of self-governing dominions; America peopling a continent within a century, following the lure of "manifest destiny" to far outposts of empire; Lenin and Stalin, preaching the doctrine of Karl Marx, boldly

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launching out in a continent-wide experiment of radical social and economic reconstruction and dreaming of a "world-revolution of the proletariat"; statesmen of many nations patiently building a League of Nations and striving to establish a world-wide commonwealth of peoples through the discipline of new habits of conference and good-will—there is infinitely more here than the blind urge of hunger or the operation of impersonal economic laws in a purely mechanistic universe. The Adventurous God is marching down through history, drawing the nations slowly and with many haltings and reverses, but surely onward toward an all-inclusive fellowship.

Once again the web of human history seems woven in an amazing intricacy of varying social patterns around the motif of the emergence of the individual from the social mass. In primitive society the individual is almost nonexistent. Even the chiefs of the clan or tribe are as much social symbols as they are individuals. The seeming confusion in the early chapters of Genesis whereby names of tribes are used as names of individuals is a confusion that was part of the structure of primitive society. The political history of men can be written in terms of the increasing number of politically recognized individuals in the social group. Time was when the king was the only political person recognized by government. Even the great lords were vassals, and to a degree the personal property of the king. The rise of democracy has brought an enormous increase in the number of politically functioning persons in the state.

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Today democracy seems to be drifting in the doldrums. Democracy is under a cross-fire from two directions. On the one hand it is arraigned by Fascism because of its administrative inefficiency. On the other hand the form in which the democratic movement has crystallized in Western Europe and America is denounced by communists and radical socialists for having stopped so far short of a universal recognition of civil individuality. While communism, in its complete subordination of the individual to the party and to the state, represents a reaction against the recognition of the individual essentially similar to Fascism, the socialist criticism of democracy as a failure to bring complete political individuality to all the working masses falls in line with the major drift of political development. The rise of Fascism and militant Communism only points the fact that in life we do not have to do with a smoothly flowing stream. Life is a continuous struggle. However we may attempt to account for it, there is opposition and retreat as well as victory and advance. There is always a villain in the plot. But the drama moves on. The Adventurous God, through the progressive discovery and liberation of the individual moves forward toward an all-inclusive co-operative fellowship.

This element of individualism in democracy has been particularly under fire during the last generation. The "rugged individualism" which President Hoover has acclaimed as the characteristic American spirit has manifestly failed to meet the demands of life today. The development of democracy itself, during the last genera-

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tion, has been marked by a steady growth in the degree of our consciousness of and in the creation of agencies for the expression of a sense of social responsibility. We are beginning to realize that the achievement of complete individuality of personal experience involves the cultivation of a fine sense of social responsibility. The individualism that found expression in a *laissez faire* economics, that has been damned by the communists with the epithet of "capitalism," that has been identified by a certain school of smart critics of contemporary religion as synonymous with Protestantism, is actually only one stage in the development of full individuality. We might just as reasonably condemn an educational process because of the instability of adolescent youth taken midstream in the process as arraign Protestantism because of the manifest evils of *laissez faire* economics and the immature individualism of present-day capitalistic society. Through the long struggle for the emancipation of womanhood and the protection of childhood from economic exploitation; through the travail of nations and peoples to give birth to democracy, through the growing pains of that expanding democratic idea striving to adjust itself to a world transformed by industrialization and unified by modern methods of communication and transportation, through the struggle of the toiling masses for liberation from chattel bondage and for recognition of their complete economic individuality as partners in the processes of production and distribution, through the clash and bitter struggle of the idea of social responsibility with the aberrations of an

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immature individualism, through all the welter of political and social and economic conflict, the Adventurous God moves forward toward the achievement of an all-inclusive co-operative fellowship.

3

SINCE men began to think at all about the problem of human experience, their thought has been haunted by the conviction that the whole story could not be told within the limits of the span that stretches between birth and death. One life and one world has never been enough for the restless human spirit. The possibilities of this limited area of experience are far too straightened. Too much is left incomplete. Death leaves too many loose ends hanging. We get so few strands of meaning into our grasp and the vast web of life extends so many leagues beyond our reach. Our experience is largely a tissue of disconnected fragments. We never can piece the rough edges together. The whole picture never quite all fits together. We are constrained to believe that we must go on to complete the piece. We speak our broken lines and pass on off the stage. We never see the whole play out. Neither our minds nor our hearts are satisfied. We must go on to see the story through. However we account for it, it is true that men seem never content without some outlook for the soul beyond the somber curtain of the grave.

It is very much in fashion today to say that we shall find the compensation for the fragmentary character of one's life experience and the completion of personality

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that we seek through a growing consciousness of the solidarity of the race. We play our little part and speak our broken lines, and another generation comes on the stage to take up the plot where we left off and carry it on. We shall find our immortality in the contribution that we make to the development of the race. The generations pass. The race lives on. This may be a comfortable philosophy for some of the chosen few who sit in the seats of power and privilege and can picture dramatically to their imagination some seemingly substantial increment to racial history that may grow out of their brief experience. But, for the masses whose individual lives remain forever submerged in the undifferentiated social mass, this prospect offers but cold comfort. It has little more significance to them than the reflection that after death the various physical elements that have gone into the structure of their bodies will become again part of the vast mechanism of inanimate nature and may, perchance, through the ever repeated process of assimilation, be taken up and enter into other bodies and find transcendent embodiment for other human lives.

This whole effort to substitute a form of social immortality or a kind of pantheistic ecstasy for the immemorial hope of men denies in its first premise that which we have all felt to be the supreme value of all human experience—the consciousness of individuality and sense of the intrinsic worth of personal experience. It becomes a matter of far more serious import than the mere question of our right to continue to hold a long-

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cherished belief. It becomes a symbol of a social ideal, the watermark of a pattern of human conduct. It is a serious question how long we can hope to maintain our sense of the paramount importance of human values, how long we can sustain our growing passion for human service, how long we can maintain our loyalty to the ideal of social responsibility—these elements that we have hailed as the outstanding social achievements of our generation—after we have given over our faith that in human personal experience we have to do with something that transcends the limits of purely physical and temporal existence. The issue raised by the modern challenge to faith in immortality is one of the major moral issues of our day.

The argument that personal immortality or the survival of conscious existence after the dissolution of the physical organism is untenable in the light of the manifest dependence of our mental life upon the physical organism will not stand the test of a close examination of the idea of the continuity of material substance. It is a commonplace of biology that the material substance of which these physical organisms are composed is in a state of constant flux. The ordinary processes of absorption, assimilation, and excretion are continually changing the purely material content of every physical organism. There is not a man of us who, on a purely material basis, can claim to be the same individual today he was ten years ago—or for that matter ten seconds ago. Now, when we face the problem of the continuity of human consciousness, no one has yet successfully at-

tempted to account for the persistence of this continuity in the stream of constantly changing material substance upon the basis that the material substance must bear the whole burden of the explanation. All the attempts to limit the possibility of the persistence of consciousness to the continuity of material structure fail completely to account for the transference of consciousness of identity from one material atom to another in the ceaselessly changing material substance of the cortex of the brain. We do not need to postpone till death our wrestle with this problem. We face it in every moment of our experience. It is impossible to account for even the passing experiences of today and their persistent identity with our memories of yesterday and our anticipations of tomorrow without assuming a quality of existence that is inherently independent of any necessary continuity of material substance. No one has yet offered any real account of a continuity that bridges the gap from one material atom to another on any other basis than that of a more fundamental spiritual unity. All that we can say about the relation of intelligence and consciousness to nerve tissue is that in an environment such as that in which we find ourselves, an environment whose structure includes material elements and physical relations, the human physical organism seems to be a necessary medium by which human spirits establish living relations with that environment and offers the most immediately convenient medium for the functioning of co-operative fellowship. It is not only possible, it is what we should reasonably expect, that an environment

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whose structure is as radically different from that of our present world, as we have every reason to anticipate the environment in which human spirits will find themselves after death will be, the form of organism through which they will relate themselves to that environment and carry forward that co-operative fellowship that is so essential to the highest fulfilment and most radiant and creative expression of personality, may very well be radically different from the physical organism that now functions as the instrument of personal intelligence.

The outlook of religion has never been content either with the span of a single life or with social vision that includes a succession of human generations. It has always included an attempt of faith to explore the unknown beyond the grave and an expectation that ultimately the dis severed elements of individual and social experience will be united in an Eternal Fellowship. Our social passion and our immortal hope can never be disconnected without peril either to the virility of our social ideals or to the sanity of our individual religious experience. Somehow these two aspects of life must be kept united. The Christian tradition has included an element of apocalyptic vision as well as a proclamation of personal salvation and the stern demands of social righteousness. Discussion of the question of immortality has all too often turned upon the purely individual aspects of the question. We are always likely to limit our thinking about the prospects of life beyond to the relation of that outlook of faith

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to individual personal experience. We need to re-examine this whole question of immortality in the light of its significance for the race as a whole. As long as we think of life as a matter that is limited to successive generations of purely physical existence, we fail inevitably to see the deepest meaning of the plot. The principles of dramatic structure that seem so ineradically a part of the very structure of Reality demand that all the broken threads of action and experience shall be gathered up in some Grand Denouement just as imperiously as do the logical qualities of experience demand that our representations of reality must be logical and reasonable. We do not need to enter here into the hotly contested field of apocalyptic speculation or seek to adjudicate the merits of rival champions. It is enough that we recognize in the apocalyptic element in the Gospel a declaration of faith that in the long last the Adventurous God is certain to emerge triumphant. The drama of human experience and of divine-human relationships is moving forward to a grand consummation in an Eternal Fellowship.

What may lie beyond that consummation, whether it may prove to be only a new turn in a plot of still grander dimensions than we have yet conceived, with new complications and new struggle rising to new climaxes and moving forward to new denouements—whether this dramatic pattern will be discovered to be an eternal pattern—these are subjects for speculation that have little practical significance for us today. It is enough to give men courage to face the issues of today,

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and hope to wait for the long future to complete the plot, and joy in the consciousness of comradeship with the Adventurous God, to be reassured by faith that in the long last there shall come a consummation. Then, indeed, shall the Adventurous God "see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied" in the achievement of an Eternal Fellowship.

Whatever may be the particular form of the ultimate fate of those who set themselves in uncompromising rebellion against the purposes of God—whether the final outcome of this course will spell for them the final dissolution of personality, or the ultimate failure to achieve a fully matured individuality, leaving them as sub-personal creatures constrained to obedience, whether it will find them enduring eternally the consciousness of divine displeasure, or whether consciousness itself will cease for those who fail to yield themselves to the cultivation of those qualities and attitudes that make a completely matured personality possible—we are persuaded that ultimately the element of stubborn rebellion and schism and the persistent thwarting of the divine purpose which human sin, together with whatever other elements "Given" or otherwise derived, have entered into the cosmic situation have projected into the plot, will take their final exit from the stage. The dissevered elements of the Great Society, separated by imperfect understandings and by warring purposes and by death, will ultimately be united in one all-inclusive Eternal Fellowship, in the citizenship of the Kingdom of the Adventurous God.

COLOPHON

THE ADVENTUROUS GOD was composed on the linotype in eleven point Garamond, leaded two points. Little is known of Claud Garamond, the individual, except the fact that he was conceded by his contemporaries to be the most famous type designer of his time (1541). Garamond has vivified his type by introducing a decided contrast in the main and minor lines, and more freedom in curves. The long ascenders and descenders not only enhance the beauty and gracefulness of the letters, but make reading easy and prevent the frequent error of crowding the lines.

The body is printed on sixty pound Garamond Text, end sheets are Buckeye Laid Text, and the case is of Hollister's Payka natural finished cloth stamped in cerise ink.

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